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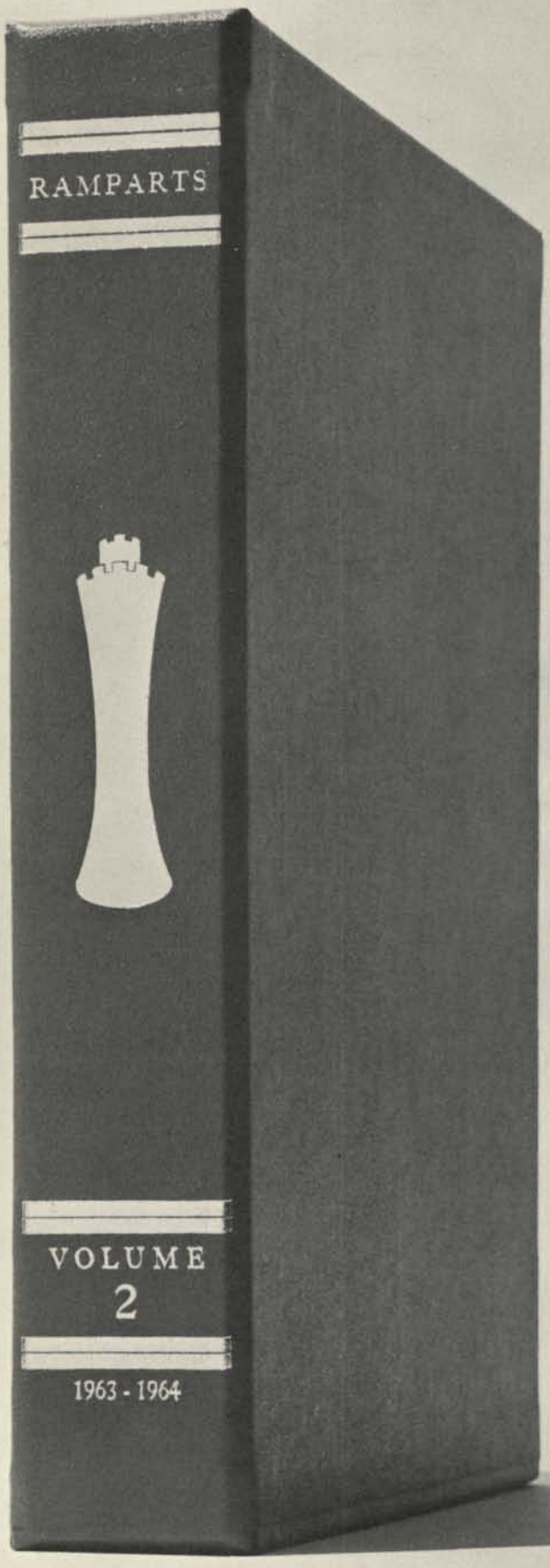

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Business Manager Richard B. Paulsen
Promotion Director Warren Hinckle
Design Richard Cork
Circulation Barbara Brown
Consultant Max Silten

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The Tongs Of Jeopardy

BECAUSE A MIGHTY NATION, as it waxes and grows powerful, also grows corrupt; because a young nation, experiencing an enormous expansion of creative energy, also grows complacent and materialistic; because a great nation, committed to the highest political ideal any people has yet realized, if not conceived, carries somehow in its heart an unregenerate cynicism; because of all these things and many, many more, such a nation, such a people, profoundly distressed by the contradictions troubling it, cries out for some inexplicable event to shock it into awareness, restore it to the reality of its meaning in the life of mankind, and thereby once again confirm it in the vision of its destiny. But when this terrible and hallowing event does actually occur, that nation, that people, shaken to the roots of its certitude, paradoxically seeks to escape the recognition its soul has been crying out for, seeks to evade the obligation to read what has been inscripted on the wall of its heart, and doubling back, seizes up once more the occasions of forgetfulness, in order that it may at last be spared the pain of what it truly wished to know.

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BROTHER ANTONINUS, *famed Dominican poet, is the author of* The Crooked Lines of God *(1959) and* The Hazards of Holiness *(1962). His* Reflections on the Death of President Kennedy *appeared first in the Winter 1963 issue of SEASON, a Dominican quarterly issued from Saint Albert's College in Oakland. Grateful acknowledgments are extended to SEASON for permission to reprint.*

For man thinks logically. He feels he can understand only what he can reduce to reason and its terms. But God acts symbolically. Confounding man's logic, he thrusts upon him the most profound and disturbing significations, and holds them there until their depth of implication is ineradicably registered. Then the inner reality concealed in the heart of things, which human logic never perceives, shakes the mind out of its dream of superficial wellbeing, a dream that was actually leading to disaster. When a nation falsifies the vision of its creative destiny with a specious logic, and in so doing rationalizes the corruptness that no logic can justify, God himself assumes the initiative, and visits upon it the most paralyzing rebukes producible from the forces latent in its historic situation. Sometimes these come as natural catastrophes, inflicting a stinging chastisement: earthquakes, floods, drought and starvation. And sometimes they come as naked war, so that the militant energies of a people are summoned up, and the confusion in its heart is purged through sacrifice, hardship and service.

But sometimes not even war, nor any concatenation of natural disasters, can be sufficiently efficacious to reach what has to be reached, the somnolent nerve deep in the muffled soul of a people. Too vast and too powerful, it may absorb adversity and sustain misfortune, to emerge exulting in the wonder of its triumph and the savor of its strength. Then comes the hour of great moral or spiritual crisis, and something keener, something more acute, more precisely specified to the deceptive complaisance fattening in the entrails of that people is mysteriously prepared and held in readiness, until the finger of God moves ever so slightly, and there occurs an act destined to take its place forever in its heart and in its soul. That people will receive a wound from which it is fated never to recover, a wound with which it must live for the rest of its days.

When on November twenty-second, at high noon, in the city of Dallas, John F. Kennedy, President of the United States, fell forward shot through the head, there was set in motion one of those cumulative episodes that establish a nation within the authority of its presence, probing through layer after layer of superficiality, in-

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souciance and pride, until that nerve, hardly suspected but enormously vital deep in the native bone, was struck with iron, so that in the stunned response, in the response of the world, those reverberations were set free which will shake the future, sounding upon the imagination and troubling the memory of every person hereafter who will bear the American name.

And because President Kennedy epitomized youth in all its incisiveness, intelligence and discipline, his falling struck at precisely those attributes of the American psyche with blinding force. Something in the onthrusting energy of the nation was momentarily checked, something which it had always felt to be the best part of itself, the living actualization of that aspirative Hope the most progressive elements in the community had long dreamed of and at last possessed. And to see this hope cut down before our eyes on the screen of our television — those inexhaustible fixtures before which hour after hour we had beguiled ourselves with the phantasies of opulence and profusion; these eyes so voluptuously infatuated with the prospect of an ultimate enravishment — shattered us with truth, and as the great action began to unfold left us hanging there, unspeakably appalled and grotesquely fascinated.

Appaled, because youth cut down is always a staggering thing; appalled, because the head of a state cut down evokes the most oppressive feelings of the human heart; appalled, because in the presence of the victim once again the Divine Victim mounts his Calvary while the whole of mankind, as in a dream, looks on, unable to put forth a hand to prevent it — so on that day, indescribably appalled, we as a nation sat in horror, and watched unfold the scenario of our archetypal destiny.

But fascinated, too, because in some terrible manner the worst aspects of our multifarious being were having their hour, their private Night of the Long Knives; fascinated because the snake in our nature never sleeps, striking from behind with incredible accuracy at what we love most, and in so loving, envy, and in so envying must begrudge; fascinated because our masked vindictiveness, despite all the protest of ideal virtue, will not be denied, but slakes itself fiercely in the venom of hatred and assassination. So we as a nation rocked through the four days of our mythic ritual of betrayal, death and interment, torn between the exalted liturgy in Washington and that horrifying snakepit of regicide, murder, seizure, denial and extermination in Dallas, — the two facets of our national character enacting each its own version of what we are, separated by fifteen hundred miles of American earth, but inexorably related, in a hideous contrapuntally thematic dance of death, on the screen of our television.

Had the assassination been perpetrated by an older man, anyone of our generation sufficiently advanced in years to symbolize fatherhood, the blighting effect on the nation would have been incalculable. It would have been as if the unconscious part of the patriarchy, unable to legitimately prevent the palpable rashness of a freewheeling youth who had captured the machinery of government and was threatening national stability in an excess of idealism, had reached out its hand and struck down the novice, as Zeus struck down Phaethon, and for identical reasons. But because the hero died at the hand of one who must symbolize not the Father but the Brother (and the younger brother at that, with all its connotations of instability and pervasive sibling disgruntlement) the event fell more comprehensively within the American ethos than the other might have, and therefore, as fratricide, does not lay its pall upon the future with the same depth-draining vitiation that filicide normatively occasions.

FOR SYMBOLICALLY SPEAKING, the American understands fratricide, as he understands civil war, better than he understands any kind of authoritarian repression. We have never had a king. And hence Americans will never be Isaacs kneeling in faith beneath the dagger of a Parent-God. Rather, before our eyes, Cain and Abel (whom we recognize as none other than the faces of our discontent) enact again their archaic curse, and in this transgression, by virtue of that ancient one, we are able to grope for the kernel of truth that is the germ of its secret redemptive

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meaning, and to somehow go forward from this our crime with our national life purged but not paralyzed. And because in our heart of hearts we understand Cain, we also understand how we, in this atrocity, both shot down the finest thing, politically speaking, this century has produced, and at the same time broke our hearts with grief at its passing, to create, in the great ritual burial, the most magnificent collective act, so exalted and noble in its solemnity and measure, that we as a people have ever achieved: a ceremonial drawn to more majestic proportions than all our techniques of political conventioneering or of Hollywood giganticism could ever have contrived.

Thus it is that having experienced all this, we must try to understand it, but we cannot understand it unless we acknowledge our involvement in something we detest—unless we confess to what seems impossible: that in our blindness we actually sanctioned what was done, and sanctioning it in advance brought it into being. There is no other explanation for the paroxysm of contrition which swept so many penitents into the confessionals of the nation in the aftermath of our tragedy. Understanding Cain, how can we protest that we cannot know what went on in the smoky heart of this renegade, this dark enigmatic Oswald, bearing the strangely aristocratic name that sounds so odd on the tongues of Americans, this disinherited scion of some past European greatness, who never knew a father's blessing and hence never secured any kind of grasp on a responsible ethic? To dismiss this act as madness is to put it beyond our ken, that is to say, beyond our consciousness, and fail to grasp its significance of insight into our complexity of outrage and grief. Resentful, introverted and ineffectual, he was the other side of the Kennedy image, as the vain and effeminate John Wilkes Booth was the other side of Lincoln's. Being myself something of the other side of the Kennedy image, I find that of all the figures of this drama Oswald I know the best, and I know him because in some terrible way he is myself.

For though it is certain I could never have been John F. Kennedy (and when will we ever again behold in a single man that quintessential synthesis of positive resources?) I can only tremble before the tissue-paper division of fate that kept me from being Lee Harvey Oswald. Whatever he possessed of the superficial mental climate of the Communist, the manifest fact, revealed unmistakably in his face and demeanor, attests to the constitutive emotional disposition of the Beatnik: one of the intense loners who, eschewing the insignia of beard and jesus sandals, pursues his subterranean purposes with the fixity of an introverted mole. Proud, sensitive, morose, "disaffiliated," he had the Kerouac cut, but lacked that redemptive Kerouac buoyancy and élan. Seeing him on television that first time, struggling among policemen, I thought, "That cat really bugs the fuzz." Place his picture anywhere in *The Beat Scene* or *I Am A Lover*, you will detect no point of discrepancy. A Beatnik who never found his water, disdaining the "normal" Beat outlets, the conventional Beat unconventionalities (save the pro-Castroism and the exotic touch of the Russian wife); who never vented his ire in the distinctive Beat way these antipathies are effectively dissipated, or transmuted into mysticism, or shaped into the modalities of creative dissent, he came to thirst for a fiercer discongruity, and most gladly took up the cudgels of revolution. But the hard core Communists sized him up instantly and wanted no part of him. He was not of their stamp. Now, considering his performance, they are deeply embarrassed. As for him, the complexities of revolution failing him, what was more pertinent than the specific directness of assassination, in all its provocative simplicity, once that prospect beckoned?

And so, slowly, with an inflexible and almost ponderous relentlessness, the ancient vortex once again began to turn.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
but unto Cain and his offering he had no respect.
And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell . . .

And it came to pass, when they were in the field,

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that Cain rose up against Abel his brother,
and slew him . . .
And God said: "What hast thou done?
the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me
out of the ground.
And now thou art cursed from the earth,
which hath opened her mouth to receive thy
brother's blood from thy hand . . ."

O Cain! Cain! what Evil throning in your heart ordained you to its rite, its sacrament of hatred, its ministry of spleen?

So the Communists rejected their aspirant, or rather brushed him off, as if fate clearly understood that the tongs of jeopardy, given the shape of things ahead, were not to be entrusted to them. Their subsequent solicitude, at once embarrassed and relieved, proves, if we need proof, that this is a familial, not a political crime, and their distance keeps it pure. For once again, as so often in the course of history, regardless of what bizarre configurations on the chart of an era the trajectories of two protagonists might trace before, in that final, ineluctable centering-in, their paths actually cross, the supporting cast, true kinsmen of the blood, stand incognizantly by to take up the action. Two figures emerge, and we recognize them instantly as Uncles, fair to the fair and dark to the dark, each to assume, through what inverse processes, the imperatives of destiny. Within ninety minutes, Lyndon Baines Johnson, seasoned, proficient and resolute, grasps the bloody tiller before the ship can yaw, and keeps the course. Within thirty-six hours his dark evasive opposite, Jack "Sparky" Ruby, ingratiating broker between the hunger of men and its shadowy food, slides through a screen of police and reporters toward his focal hate, and without an instant's hesitation delivers the *coup de grâce*.

THE ASSASSINATION, then, is avenged. And for all our protestation about who must, and who must not, share approximate responsibility for the one, there can be no doubt at all about who must bear direct responsibility for the other. We must. In a most unequivocal way the man Oswald was sacrificed to nothing other than our curiosity, through the medium of the television cameras. Out of deference to us, massed breathlessly behind the lens, the time has been announced and the stage is ready. At the moment of appearance the guard that should precede the prisoner, shielding him from frontal attack, is obligingly withdrawn, thus clearing the view. Some photographs show Ruby, gun extended, virtually on top of his victim, and all unseen by either the prisoner or his guards: eyes glued on the camera, each man is conscious only of his moment before the peephole of history. Or is it merely that the glare of floodlights makes any other vision impossible? Is it merely that the extended gun is indistinguishable in that glare from the bristling microphones thrust toward them?

Be that as it may, the pressure upon the harassed Dallas police must have been enormous, but it was as nothing compared to our pressure on the news agencies themselves. What would we have done if they had failed to bring us the graphic engrossing chronicle unfolding there? What resistances could have withstood our insatiable hunger for experience, our need to see what was happening *as it happened*, our craving to slake our lurid and monumental avidity to the very spilling of a prisoner's blood? The sigh we sighed as that cornered prey slumped to the floor was the token of our gratification. Crouched in horror before our television sets, having willed it into being, we received our reward.

And what of the Avenger, the shifty dark mixer who slipped forward so easily to do the work the whole world was thirsting to see done, certain in its heart that however the law may spell it out a snake has no rights, and the only way to deal with a snake is to smash it dead? A creature of shadows, at once ubiquitous Master of Strippers and buddy of the police, he had catered too long to men's forbidden needs ever to fail them now, when the real jungle appetites were athirst and on the prowl. Oswald's long-lost Uncle, he lived the fawning class-adulation that shaped the other side of the youth's virulent class hatred. But look: adulation conceals envy, and envy hides resentment; resentment breeds in malice, and malice feeds on fear. By what circuitous routes do we arrive back at the hidden

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side of our hearts! Seeing those wreaths on the highway, the tell-tale accusative emblems of assassination, which of us escaped the troublous associations that wake the conscience to its twinge? And facing the snake itself, this indecency, this loathsome vermin that carried our envy and malice to its unfaceable term, what do we do? What has mankind always done? Choking with guilt and grief, we smash it dead.

Is this too facile? Could it not be rather that he too, Mr. Ruby, our jewel, caught up in the great tribal paroxysm of shock and self-recrimination, the shuddering instant of disbelief and fascination that possessed us all, longing to redeem his past, the soiled years of his seamy complicity, to be better, to rise to the greatness of his human potential and, in a single act of courage and directness, dispel the fetor and wipe out the dross—is it not possible that he too, in his moment of truth, deeply stirred by those wreaths on the pavement, at last came clean?

But look again: his "selfless" act places him in a unique relationship to a woman of real quality, even taking, in a way (does he not?) the husband's protective place—that other Jack, whom he so wanted to be, and whom fate has snatched, to leave her curiously exposed and hence approachable, and singularly in need of defense? Is this envy or is it love, a kind of buried envious love finding its aperture in the flash of events and showing its face? *I did it for her.* He has said it in so many words. *I did not want her to suffer any more.* Even if he goes now to the electric chair, in one of those ritual extensions of justice by which a society forever tidies up its conscience, he will go sustained in the certitude of his purposefulness. How many times, between the assassination and its aftermath, must he have heard men say, on those streets and in that prison, that Oswald ought to have been gunned down like a dog?

This Sparky did. And for this he goes congratulated, if not respected. (All his life that seems to have been his portion: congratulation without respect, given like an ostentatious tip conferred on one who does what decent men desire but cannot stoop to.) Interviewed on the streets immediately following the killing many men, stoutly loyal to the ideal and its code, its consistent logic, declared the act to be every bit as despicable as the atrocity it avenged. But many women (closer, may we infer, to the heart of motivation and intuiting the crude chivalry of a lady's man to the end?) insisted he did rightly. Whatever the courts decide, Mr. Ruby has not been without his satisfactions. Nursing in his heart the milk of his secret love, spiked like a doctored highball with the venom of muted envy, he can rise to die, even as he stooped to kill, "for her."

And yet, somehow, out of this sordidness, out of this betrayal and this butchery, out of this incestuous fratricidal killing and counter-killing, we are enabled to know that we are a truly great people. Because we have through this ordeal been proved in depth—a depth of greatness not established by virtue of our military prowess or scientific achievement, but measured in our anguish, authenticated in our death and sacramental burial. Sustaining grief, we at last possess it, a greatness not measurable in achievement but rather measureless in depth, not at all the same as something proved to the world, the object of our strident effortfulness. In that effort, that prowess and achievement, we did indeed prove truth, and this the world acknowledged, but it was not convinced. Steeped in an immemorial, maternal sorrow, it knew that the effort of youth comes cheap. It knew that all the confused suffering of our global wars was not as this suffering. Once before, in the slaying and burial of our Father Abraham, the world glimpsed greatness in us, this true contemplative greatness, the capacity to sustain pain, live in it, *subsist* in it, an abyss of inconsolable loss, perhaps the supreme greatness a people can know, for it alone purchases atonement. Shaken with wonderment, a strange, awesome comprehension, we have received it again, this grace, in the slaying and burial of the Son, our brother, who was our better, brighter, smiling self, who is now gone from us, but who, because of the manner of his going, will live in our consciousness forever.

Nor let us fail to acknowledge our complicity with that other son, our sullen secret brother, Brother Cain, of the serpent's breed, who had to

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strike down what he could never best in equal contest, who, lacking a father and a father's blessing, unable to secure that blessing either in his fatherland or in the longed for land of his adoption, must wrig back home, and like a copperhead in a swamp cypress, await the moment the boatman slows, then nail the neck.

It is, when it comes, the moment of God or Satan, and he must face it. For in its gravity all the flotsam of equivocation by which men mostly live is at last gone, swept away by the relentless onpressing forces of the event itself, terrible in its actuality, emerging there, as naked as noon, for the flick of his decision. Was it mere chance that a presidential motorcade happened to turn by a warehouse where he happened to work? Was it mere chance that the years had perfected him in the single skill that could reach through all that careful defense-in-depth to its nerve and center? Was it mere chance that of the potential miscreants in the city of Dallas he alone escaped surveillance? A conjunction of circumstances too rare to be random they must have stalked his sleep until, behind those windowblinds of guile, they drew him to the rendezvous and stroked the moment home. Crouched in his nest, among the primers and chickenbones of his heart, he peered down the foreign gun to his life's conclusion, where Abel, blessed of God, ensconced in his patrimony, the Lincoln Continental, drew smilingly by. This was his utmost instant. Like one before him in another upper room, told to do quickly what he had set himself to do, he tensed for the shock. And with matchless precision, coordinated into a perfect mechanism of destructive force by those years of gall, he dipped his hand in the eternal dish, and proved true to the ancient form.

Let us praise God then, who in his immemorial dispensations, who in his awesome givings and takings away, has made for us one of those hinges by which we as a people may turn and gaze deep into the reality of what we are, and thereby acquire an essential discernment into our shaken heart—which was really what we needed most and couldn't know—one terrible moment of loss and comprehension. Because down from his Calvary, in a kind of sublime Deposition, like the greater Man before him whose Faith he averred and whose religion he practiced, the hero of our national hope fell into the arms of the Bride-Mother, a woman who, all unknown to anyone, possessed the spontaneous intuition, the nerves of steel and the unexcellable capacity to grasp what the nation needed, seize up his fallen body, and with those hands splashed with a sacrificial blood, give his life and his death back to his people.

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THE CHURCH AND THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

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John Cogley

A NOTE ON THE BIRCH SOCIETY

JOHN COGLEY, *a former editor of* The Commonweal, *is presently living in Rome.*

ACCORDING TO Peter Viereck's famous *mot*, anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the liberals. There might also be a sense in which anti-Birchism is the anti-Communism of the liberals. For the Birchites incarnate all that the American liberal hates and fears in public life. The Birch movement represents paranoia on a mass basis. With its sick belief that the Enemy is everywhere — dramatized by Mr. Welch's charge that one of Them sat in the White House for eight long years — the Society has created the image of a group of people who might turn lunatic at any moment. The movement represents organized intolerance. With its insistence on political orthodoxy of the most rigid right-wing character and bitter accusations against all who dissent from it, the Society has created the image of an Hitlerian force in American life. The movement represents fanaticism unchecked. With its notorious super-patriotism, xenophobia, and extreme nationalism, it has created the image of a group that would go to any lengths to force its view on others. The movement represents reaction. With its wholesale rejection of modernity, social progress, contemporary art and literature, the modern sciences and progressive education, it has created the image of a group intent on turning back the clock to a less enlightened, less humane age. The movement represents conspiracy. With its secret membership lists, cell meetings, spy-activities, and threats of hidden powers over the lives and careers of others, it has created the image of a group awaiting the day to "take over" America. The movement represents recklessness. With its bellicose statements and the violence of its rhetoric, it has created the image of a group that might one day bring nuclear devastation to the world. Finally, the movement represents ignorance. The wild, unsubstantiated statements of Birch leaders and their fanciful accounts of contemporary history have created the image of a group whose rejection of complexity could lead to desperate acts and a barbarous assault on our civilization.

This unrelieved public image of the John Birch Society is not made out of whole cloth. There are statements of the Birch leaders, articles in their publications, and personal experiences wherever the movement thrives, to back it up. And yet . . . These are not people from another planet. One reminds oneself that they are one's own contemporaries, with the same kind of American upbringing, the same general set of experiences, the same childish memories and adolescent hopes. Why did the experience with democracy as it has actually been lived by our own generation prove to be so disappointing? Why, when they talk about their "beloved country," do they hark back constantly to an America that probably never existed but one that certainly they never could have known? For isn't it an

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odd sort of patriotism that rejects the actual institutions of government, the actual leaders and directors of its destiny; that dismisses the people who sustained those institutions and supported those leaders as dimwits and dupes; and that regards at least half of the nation's history as the product of deceit and deception by unscrupulous leaders cheerfully accepted by defrauded people? The Birchites may sing the glories of America louder than the rest of us, but it would be hard to find in history the America they sing of. For the nation as it actually existed, outside the Platonic "conservative" heaven that seems to haunt them, they have nothing but scorn. If their flags fly bravely, it is to celebrate not a nation or a common experience but a political abstraction.

All of us have ideas of what went wrong. Sociologists trace the movement to the insecurities of people achieving a certain material standard and desperately anxious to hold on to it. (The Birch movement is not working-class but is largely made up of people recently emerged from the proletariat.) Psychologists put their emphasis on the overburdening weight of modern complexities and the desire to single out not vague historical forces but easily identifiable persons and organizations that can be blamed. Political commentators attribute the movement to the success of a certain number of well-financed demagogues and rabble-rousers. There are accounts which stress the ambitions of newly-minted millionaires and frustrated military men. Others see the movement as a perverse victory for the Communists, a further exemplification of the old idea that hate impels the hater to ape the thing he hates. Each of these explanations is plausible, if not wholly satisfying, and together they go a long way toward making the Birch movement less mysterious, sociologically, psychologically, politically, theologically. But the seemingly simple statement of one of my colleagues, the philosopher Scott Buchanan, caused me more unease than any other comments on the subject I have heard.

Mr. Buchanan once got to talking about the Birch Society and groups like them with which both he and I have had unhappy, painful experiences. "They are trying to tell us something," he said. "They think we won't listen, and so they take these outrageous ways to get our attention and force their presence upon us." The explanation sounded so facile that my first reaction was to pass over it. But I have learned from experience that Mr. Buchanan has a rare gift for striking at the heart of a matter with a simple statement. I began to wonder what it was that the Birchers were trying to tell us, if indeed that was it. Scott Buchanan had said that it behooved the nation to listen to them, as one should listen to the native Communists and every manner of extremist, and not be content with condemnation, anathema, and excommunication. Ever since, I have been trying—with little success—to decipher the Birch message.

It would seem to be, I have concluded, a demand for an American ideology, to counter the rigid orthodoxy of the Communist world. For, historically, the United States has operated with a dismaying lack of consistency. We have been both liberal and conservative—or, to make a distinction dear to the Birchers' heart, both democratic and republican. The reason for this, I believe, is that from the very beginning we have been the heirs of two almost contradictory traditions. On the one hand, we are a product of the Christian West and, on the other, a child of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment. To be sure, we had our beginnings in revolution, but it was a conservative revolution. The Founding Fathers fought not for a brand new idea, a breakthrough as we would say today, but for the rights of free men in the homeland. Their struggle, at least in the beginning, was not inspired by any messianic notion of millenial significance; rather they were interested in conserving in the New World the notions of limited government, an enabled Parliament, Magna Charta, and all the hard-won achievements of Englishmen. This was the basis for the conservative element in American life.

But the Founding Fathers were also men of their own time who were not deaf to the ideas of the Enlightenment. If the conservative element of their heritage was a product of Christian tradition, looking back to 1066 and all that, there

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was a liberal element just as well, which has hung on in American life to this day. It seems that this element is the one the Birchers and their followers would like to cancel out or treat as a cancerous growth.

It is true that it is not easy to reconcile the two elements. The conservative stands for traditional order, stability, and the aristocratic principle. It embraces all that is summed up in the phrase "republican virtue": a suspicion of change, a distrust of the masses, the need for republican representation and limitation on political power, a built-in check on governmental exuberance, etc. Traditionally, it canonizes frugality on the part of the lower classes and *noblesse oblige* on the part of the upper. It stresses simple piety for the humble and a fairly housebroken religion for all the people: religion is conceived of as a stabilizing force undergirding sound political institutions that are to be uncompromisingly republican in structure. At their best, this may be the kind of America the Birchers are demanding, in their inarticulate, largely incomprehensible way. One catches glimpses of it in their dogged insistence that the United States is a republic, not a democracy, in their simple equation of liberalism with treasonable communism, and in their attempts to expunge from history the contribution liberal thought made to the development of American society.

The religious members of the Birch movement (and they would appear to be numerous) have never really accepted the Enlightenment's contribution to the making of America, because they can not conceive of a force seeded in theological rebellion and brought forth in pride of intellect as the source of good, even political good. Their conclusion is not without a basis in fact, for the liberalism of the Enlightenment did break with the religious tradition of the West, and right on its most central point, its doctrine of man. As George Santayana once said, there was in the Enlightenment "nothing subterranean acknowledged; no ultimate catastrophe, no jungle, no desert, and no laughter of the gods." The pristine liberals dreamed of a race of men released from the bondage of the traditional religion; a race of men who, by the force of their innate reason, would create a morally better world through the sheer power of intellectual energy. Knowledge, the Enlightenment philosophers proclaimed, was power. Science was looked upon as infinitely benign. History worked automatically for man. Each of these doctrines affronts the religious mind. Understood in a fundamentalist way, and the Birchers always seem to read history by moving their lips, they can be seen as the very antithesis of a religious worldview. Whoever nurtures them, goes along with the movements developed from them, or even fraternizes with their exponents, is readily tagged as an Enemy Within. And the peculiar logic of the Birch mentality sees these doctrines as the preface to full-blown Marxism. Hence the blurring of the differences between the liberal and the Communist.

The trouble is that the movements and institutions derived from doctrine are as frequently a product of history and human forces as of their dogmatic origins. This is particularly true when the doctrines have not been the sole but only one of several influences on the institutions affected.

At most, the liberal element was only one of the major influences on the shaping of America. Conservatism was ever an equal, and balancing, force. Moreover, the liberalism of the Enlightenment never reached the shores of this nation in its French consistency. Our native liberals have never been Eighteenth Century Liberals, any more than our conservatives have been *ancien régime* Conservatives. Both groups have existed side by side and have even been linked together on the programmatic basis which forms the heart of both traditions in their American incarnation. The struggle between liberalism and conservatism in the United States has not been a do-or-die, either-or, life-and-death confrontation. On the Supreme Court, in the Congress, within the political parties, and in public life, the two forces have joined together in the service of the common good, which is the essence of politics. Fortunately, neither has been found in its fullness in this country, with the result that American public life has been riddled with inconsistency and ambiguity. But this very pragmatism has served the nation well. It has given us the oldest operat-

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ing Constitution in the West and one of the most stable governments in history. We have been a live-and-let-live people. When some among us push one or another element in our many-faceted tradition to the limit, as the Birchers are doing, we all get the vague sense that something "un-American" is going on. We feel an uneasiness, a sense of something alien poisoning the political climate.

The Birch mind, even when it is highly unsophisticated, simply can not abide the ambiguity and vagueness of our American commitment. Actually, it frequently seems to have more respect for the consistency of even the movements it despises, like Communism, than for the messiness and lack of precision of our commitments. This secret admiration for the despised foe may account for the Birchers willingness to imitate the methods of the totalitarian powers. The attitude of tolerance, which seems to be devolved from the ideological inconsistency they find so reprehensible, is judged as weakness—a weakness easily exploited by "strong-minded" Communists, who, like themselves, reject the *both-and* in favor of drastic *either-ors*.

Perhaps, then, the Birchers, in the formula devised by Scott Buchanan, are trying to tell us to be totally what they insist we are—the product of the Christian West (before the Enlightenment), without any quarter given to the "enemy" forces that came later.

If that is what they are trying to tell us, I am afraid the answer we give must be no. For we are *not* one thing—nor for that matter is Christianity to be identified with one age. We are a pluralistic convergence of many different historical forces. We do not value ideological consistency as a political asset, however intellectually satisfying it might be. We do not regard tolerance as weakness or "toughmindedness" as strength. We do not reject history as embodying unalloyed evil, as they reject modern history; nor do we canonize history as embodying unalloyed good, as they canonize the history that is so old they can not remember its ambiguous details.

Mr. Buchanan has an extraordinary faith in the human intellect. Even when he sees irrational conduct, like that shown by the Birch Society, he is convinced that there is some rational basis for it. He would not let me get away with dismissing the Birchers as a psychologically sick, pathological development. "Try to find out the rational basis of their action," he told me. I am not at all sure that I succeeded. Perhaps I have not found even a clue to that basis. Perhaps, on the other hand, in my zeal to find reason where none seems apparent, I have exaggerated the complexity of the Birch argument. In any case, I can find few points of agreement with them. Just possibly though, there is enough basis for discussion. As Mr. Buchanan would remind us, the essence of the democratic commitment is to seek for a basis of discussion—even with those who seem as far away from a rational starting point as the members of the John Birch Society.

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Stillwell John Conner

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

STILLWELL JOHN CONNER *is a member of the Council of the John Birch Society; this Council, in Mr. Conner's words, "comprises a group of 26 men who meet regularly with Robert Welch to evaluate and advise on the Communist threat and the effectiveness of the Society in combating this evil." Mr. Conner is a businessman.*

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY is unequivocally opposed to Communism.

The Catholic Church is unequivocally opposed to Communism. As early as 1846 Pope Pius IX pronounced a solemn condemnation; Pope Leo XIII defined it in his encyclical QUOD APOSTOLICI MUNERIS; and in 1937 Pope Pius XI in his encyclical DIVINI REDEMPTORIS "exposed the errors and the violent, deceptive tactics of Bolshevistic and Atheistic Communism."

With clear insight he attributed its spread to "the fact that too few have been able to grasp the nature of Communism. The majority instead succumb to its deception skillfully concealed by the most extravagant promises." And he enunciated three factors—that are as prevalent today as they were in 1937, if not more so, since the intervening years have brought about a greater corrosion of moral principles.

The factors responsible for the rapid diffusion of Communism are:

• "A world already to a large extent de-Christianized."

• "A propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its likes before."

• "A conspiracy of silence on the part of a large section of the non-Catholic press of the world. We say conspiracy, because it is impossible otherwise to explain how a press usually so eager to exploit the little daily incidents of life has been able to remain silent for so long about the horrors perpetuated in Russia, in Mexico and even in a great part of Spain; and that it should have relatively so little to say concerning a *world organization* as vast as Russian Communism." (italics added)

Propaganda, a conspiracy of silence and a de-Christianized world are component parts of the climate that has nurtured atheistic Communism.

The Church's position remains unchanged as the recent statement from the Vatican clearly indicates: ". . . it is necessary to be intransigent towards Marxist and Communist ideology. The more subtle and equivocal its tactics of penetration, the more intransigent we must be."

The Church's position on socialism is likewise explicitly defined in QUOD APOSTOLICI MUNERIS, RERUM NOVARUM, QUADRAGESIMO ANNO and MATER ET MAGISTRA. In the latter Pope John XXIII referred repeatedly to "the brilliance of (Leo's) teachings" which "stand out in clear relief," and then proceeding to QUADRAGESIMO ANNO, Pope John stated: "Pope Pius XI further emphasized the fundamental opposition between

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Communism and Christianity and made it clear that *no Catholic could subscribe even to moderate socialism*." (italics added)

THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

In QUADRAGESIMO ANNO Pius XI enunciated the principle of subsidiarity. This highly significant and extremely important principle does not receive robust support from the liberal community but it is the bed-rock of conservative thinking spawned by the American Constitution, which we in The John Birch Society staunchly uphold. As Pius XI defined the principle in 1931: "It is indeed true, as history clearly proves, that owing to the changes in social conditions much that was formerly done by small bodies can nowadays be accomplished only by large corporations. None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so, too, it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. *This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable, and it retains its full truth today*. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them." (italics added)

Pope John XXIII reiterated this principle of subsidiarity in MATER ET MAGISTRA, neither minimizing nor exaggerating the role of the individual or the State and astutely observed: "Experience, in fact shows that *where private initiative of individuals is lacking, political tyranny prevails*." (italics added)

The "Beliefs and Principles of The John Birch Society" inserted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, June 12, 1962 by the Honorable John H. Rousselot of California, widely circulated by members and available from The Society, contains this corollary observation: "We believe that even where the size and functions of government are properly limited, *as much of the power and duties of government as possible should be retained in the hands of as small governmental units as possible, as close to the people served by such units as possible*. For the tendencies of any governing body to waste, expansion and despotism all increase with the distance of that body from the people governed; the more closely any governing body can be kept under observation by those who pay its bills and provide its delegated authority, the more honestly responsible it will be. *And the diffusion of governmental power and functions is one of the greatest safeguards against tyranny man has yet devised*. For this reason it is extremely important on our case to keep our township, city, county and state governments from being bribed and coerced into coming under one direct chain of control from Washington . . . we are striving, by all honorable means at our disposal and to the limits of our energies and abilities, to bring about *less government, more responsibility and a better world*." (italics added)

And "because the Communists seek, always and everywhere, to bring about more government, less individual responsibility and a completely amoral world," we oppose them at every turn.

In my judgment, the positions of the Catholic Church and The John Birch Society on Communism, Socialism and the Principle of Subsidiarity run parallel.

THE NEED FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The background, methods and purposes of The Society are presented in the BLUE BOOK originally published in 1958. In discussing the aims of The Society, "less government, more responsibility and a better world," Robert Welch wrote, ". . . precisely less federal government, because that is where our greatest danger lies; and more individual responsibility, *because that is our greatest need*." (italics added)

Other astute observers have called for a reawakening of individual responsibility, but no call has been as clear and forceful as that of our own American Bishops in their Statement of 1960 "The Need For Personal Responsibility." In forthright terms our Bishops stated: "If our future is to be worthy of our past, if the fruit of

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America's promise is not to wither before it has reached full maturity, *our present prëeminent need is to reaffirm the sense of individual obligation*, to place clearly before ourselves the foundations on which personal responsibility rests, to determine the causes of its decay and to seek the means by which it can be revived." (italics added)

They rightfully attribute "our Country's progress in human welfare" to "personal responsibility and initiative" and note that "pressures are growing for a constantly greater reliance on the collectivity rather than on the individual." They warn that "intensive socialization can achieve mass benefits, but man and morality can be seriously hurt in the process."

They define the "root cause" of these evils as "the rejection of personal responsibility. *This is a moral evil, as are all the major ills that beset the present world*. As such their cure is largely within the power of individual persons. Even the most universal evil and the threatened mechanization of man can be made to yield before the just and determined wills of individual persons." (italics added)

And then our Bishops saw fit to quote the principle of subsidarity from QUADRAGESIMO ANNO and quite definitely identified the principle of responsibility with "this principle of subsidiarity."

On the need for personal responsibility, the position of the Catholic Church and the position of The John Birch Society run parallel.

MORALITY—THE NORM OF JUDGMENT

The 1961 Statement of our Bishops on "Unchanging Duty in a Changing World" contains the following key sentence: "In today's world, our most obvious duty is to speak out, to make open profession of religious beliefs and moral convictions, to *reaffirm morality as the foundation of our nation's past greatness and of its future aspirations*." (italic added)

Members of The John Birch Society are continuously reminded never to do anything we suggest if it contradicts the dictates of our own conscience. But deeper than this concise statement are the thoughts expressed in the September 1963 Bulletin of The Society: "The John Birch Society is a body of truly good men and women of all religious creeds and shades, who are working together, each in a spirit of tolerance of another's belief which implies no compromise of one's own. These men and women of good will, good character, and humane conscience are combining their labors and their sacrifices for certain worthy beliefs and purposes which we do all share in common, under our Constitution, as American citizens. Following the path of basic morality, and doing our utmost to sustain and restore a firm sense of moral values in our civilization, is one purpose on which we all agree."

Later on we read: "Amid the infinite confusion around us today, the only safe guide is the moral standard. The important question about any proposed action, by man or by a nation, is not 'Is it smart?' but 'Is it right'?"

And again: "there simply is no safe system of measures, except morality, whereby to appraise the desirability or the wisdom of any decision or any course we must consider . . ."

The John Birch Society is deeply concerned about the lack of morality, integrity and purpose in society today and is quite in accord with the expressed opinions of our American Bishops.

There is, in the annual statements of our Bishops, a continuously expressed esteem for our American Constitution, that anyone conversant with these statements finds most endearing. Year after year, they remind us of our unique heritage, our nation founded under God, our Republic, "the respected instrument for guarding the basic rights of man, the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." And their 1963 Statement on "Bonds of Union" again stresses our heritage, our rights and our responsibilities. While warning that "we are in danger of becoming a people weakened by *secularism* in our social philosophy, *materialism* in our concept of the good life and *expediency* in our moral code." (italics added)

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS

A few years ago, The John Birch Society set about to remind Americans that "We Are A

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Republic Not a Democracy—Let's Keep It That Way." Quite a storm ensued. It seemed there were some who did not want this documentable fact exposed to public view. But we in The Society respect the wording in the pledge of allegiance to the flag and we subscribe to the statement in the "Beliefs and Principles of The John Birch Society," that "a Constitutional Republic such as our Founding Fathers gave us is probably the best of all forms of government. We believe that a democracy, which they tried hard to obviate, and into which the liberals have been trying for 50 years to convert our Republic, is one of the worst of all forms of government."

We stated the truth: We are a Republic not a democracy. And we voiced the concern of many when we added: Let's keep it that way.

For reminding Americans of the true nature of their form of government, The Society received considerable adverse publicity in the liberal-oriented communications media. The scope of this criticism was mild, however, compared to the smear that The Society was subjected to in 1961. All Americans should recognize the basic source of the anti-Communist drive.

The Communists periodically issue basic documents of direction to the communist parties throughout the world. The one issued December 6, 1960, "The Statement by the 81 Communist Parties," for the first time, listed anti-Communism as a specific target and hence a major danger to them. This document contains the directive: ". . . it is indispensible to wage a resolute struggle against anti-communism . . . that poisoned weapon which the bourgeoisie uses to fence off the masses from socialism."

Khrushchev, in his January 6, 1961, "Report on the Moscow Conference" repeated the directive: "Bourgeois propaganda is assuming an increasingly cunning nature. Its main weapon in the struggle against the Socialist camp and the Communist Parties is anti-communism. We must resolutely unmask this anti-scientific and purely false ideology."

Gus Hall, Secretary General of the Communist Party USA, emphasized the Moscow directive in his report, "The US In Today's World" printed in POLITICAL AFFAIRS, an official organ of the Communist Party. He stated: "The Communists and other fighters for peace have been made a target of attack by the Un-American Activities Committee and other reactionaries for a good many years, and *this has been stepped up recently*. The aim of such attacks is to split and destroy the peace movements. *Anti-communism is a vicious weapon against peace*, and all honest people can be brought to realize this . . . anti-communism must be opposed on grounds of democracy, as well as of the sheer practical necessity of involving all forces in the fight for peace, and *particularly such dedicated forces as the communists*." (italics added)

The key word in Gus Hall's statement is *peace*. We must understand that peace to the Communists is not the peace of honorable men, but rather to the Communists means: control in their hands. When they control the world, peace will be secured. When we understand their definition, their directive is clear: anti-communism is a force that can thwart the Communists' efforts to control the world.

As additional evidence of the communist role in the drive against the anti-communists, their semi-weekly organ THE WORKER, quoted Gus Hall in the March 11, 1962, issue: "The ultra-right is a serious danger." And THE WORKER continued: "He (Hall) pointed to the role played by communists in *signaling* the threat of the ultra-right." (italics added)

The attack against The John Birch Society was launched in the February 25, 1961, issue of the PEOPLES WORLD, the official organ of the Communist Party on the West Coast, in a featured article: "Enter (from stage right) The John Birch Society."

The story was picked up by a weekly news magazine in its March 10, 1961, issue which, interestingly enough, stated that John Birch was a Navy Captain (whereas, in fact, he was an Army Captain). This error was repeated in report after report across the country; but it was only one of many that sought to vilify and ridicule the courageous efforts of a proportionately small group of dedicated Americans.

In DIVINI REDEMPTORIS, Pope Pius XI warned of insidious propaganda and the silence

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of the press.

In 1952, Louis Budenz, one quite familiar with the techniques, having been not only a Communist but also the editor of THE WORKER, warned: "Those who assail the men and women who are patriotically opposing communism are aiding the conspiracy, whether they wish to do so or not. The anti-anti-communist is the greatest boon the Reds possess."

Anti-communists are not infallible—we have made errors—but no error of judgment should cloud the basic issue of a Communist-inspired attack. Is it mere coincidence that the intensive attacks against the anti-communists were launched, after, rather than before the Moscow Declaration of December 1960—and the principle target was The John Birch Society?

Nor has this campaign subsided. Their organs continue to attack the "Birchers," the "Birchites," the "Ultra-Right" and anti-communists in general. In the June 10, 1962, issue of THE WORKER, Gus Hall called upon the Socialists to join with the Communists: "Let's Act Together For Peace And Rights." And what is the issue—the only issue—that could "blot out" this great work for peace and rights? According to Gus Hall: "It is in fact NOT an ISSUE. It is a POISON. It is ANTI-COMMUNISM." (bold type in the original)

The conclusion of this letter sent by Hall to the National Convention of the Socialist Party—Social Democratic Federation reads: "By uniting some of the best fighters for peace and democracy it would contribute greatly to rallying the people to repulse the onslaught of reaction and set our nation on a course of peace and democracy. We await your reply.—Comradely yours, Gus Hall."

Peace and democracy equals control and socialism; *reaction* is anti-communism; and the message is clear.

The January 6, 1963, issue of THE WORKER reported that "American Catholics are joining the struggle for peace and democracy" in a glowing article captioned, "The Beginnings Of A Catholic Left." This "remarkable news" is contained in an "important" article written by Russell W. Gibbons, the National Secretary of the Catholic Council on Civil Liberties, for the December 8 issue of THE NATION, THE WORKER reports. Its references to "Birchites" and "neo-Nazi Birchism" are not in the context of the "beginnings of a Catholic left"; rather this distinction is reserved for the Catholic "leftists" who recently met in Chicago "to found a Catholic Committee For Democratic Socialism."

THE BIG BIG LIE

The Communists never vary their pitch. All anti-communists and especially The John Birch Society are "fascists," "neo-Nazi," Robert Welch is the "fuehrer." In point of fact, the range has now been broadened to include all conservative Americans. In THE WORKER editorial of November 26, 1963, the definition is quite explicit: "pro-fascists (conservative Americans)."

The tragic death of President Kennedy has brought into play the technique of the big lie—a cunning Communist propaganda weapon intended to spread doubt and confusion by accusing their adversaries of what they themselves are doing. THE WORKER zeroed in immediately, raising the banner of hate and violence and charging the anti-communists with the assassination. In several instances, liberal personalities preempted the Communist theme. THE WORKER, in its December 1, 1963, issue, printed excerpts from Gus Halls' 1961 directive on the "Gathering Ultra Right Danger" where he had stated that The John Birch Society is the "spear head" of this danger.

Four weeks later, in the December 29, 1963, issue of THE WORKER, the technique of the "Big Lie" was spelled out in great detail in Hall's lengthy directive: "Anti-Communism Perils The Nation." The editorial comments preceding his statement ascribe the "Big Lie of the 'Communist Menace'" as a "hoary Hoax"; the real danger stems from the "forces of reaction led by the men of the ultra-Right."

In the body of the article, Gus Hall says the Communists must continue their "watchfulness" and "expose all efforts by the reactionary forces to twist and manufacture facts. Such efforts are already evidenced by the statement of the Republican Congressional Policy Committee, the

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scurrilous John Birch Society and, by the scandalous speech of J. Edgar Hoover and by such words as those of Sen. Thruston Morton who said of Oswald that 'his mind had been warped by an alien violence, not by a national condition.' "

The "big lie" finds its rightful roost if we remember that Lee Harvey Oswald was a self-proclaimed Marxist; and then see Gus Hall use the terminology "we Marxists," in this directive where he also states: "Needless to repeat he (Oswald) never was a communist or a marxist."

And yet, the Communist mentality of Hall holds that our "lawmakers and law-enforcement agencies live by the Big Lie"; which he also categorizes as the "big deliberately manufactured lie" and the "Big Lie of Anti-Communism." And it follows, of course, that the "Communist menace" is only a "supposed danger."

Gus Hall's concluding admonition directs the party members to prepare for a lengthy "struggle" because the "attempts to utilize the assassination to attack the left . . . will become a long-range weapon of the ultra-Right reactionary forces . . ."

Our American Bishops phrased it well in their 1959 Statement on "Freedom and Peace": "First, among the main obstacles to peace and freedom in our present world is obviously world Communism. Communists do indeed preach peace and freedom and preach it incessantly; their actions, however, belie their word. They stir up hatred and distrust." And part of the Communist threat to peace is "the widespread sowing of the seed of hatred within nations and among nations."

Catholics can well afford to heed these words of our Bishops and to recognize that hatred and violence, which the Communists seek to identify with those who oppose their Godless tyranny, are, in fact, weapons of their own design in their plan for total world conquest and total world enslavement.

Both our American Bishops and The John Birch Society recognize the real fomentors of hatred.

HONORABLE MEANS AND A WORTHY END

We, in The John Birch Society, "believe that means are as important as ends in any civilized society. Of all the falsehoods that have been so widely and deliberately circulated about us, none is so viciously untrue as the charge that we are willing to condone foul means for the sake of achieving praiseworthy ends. We think that Communism as a way of life, for instance, is completely wrong; but our ultimate quarrel with the Communists is that they insist on imposing that way of life on the rest of us by murder, treason, and cruelty rather than by persuasion." (Beliefs and Principles of The John Birch Society, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, June 12, 1962)

And further defined in the Society's Bulletin for December 1963: "In a world where it is increasingly taken for granted that the end justifies the means, we must argue for and live up to the principle that honorable means are just as important as worthy ends in any society or any era that aspires to be civilized. In a world where blasphemy is considered smart, we must 'let more of reverence in us dwell,' and show all who will see the worth of that reverence. In a world where falsehood has now become the accepted custom, we must constantly show the value and the necessity of truth."

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Because there is nothing so important as the truth and because the Communists can ill afford to bask in its penetrating light, our program is essentially an educational one. And to that end, and for that purpose we have published in our American Opinion Reprint Series books that have penetrated the fog of obfuscation blanketed around us and which when originally published, the liberal-oriented press either ignored, or through adverse reviews, curtailed.

These aspects of a silent press which Pius XI in DIVINI REDEMPTORIS warned were prominent factors in the rapid spread of Communism, are exceedingly well documented in one of the first books the Society reprinted – *While You Slept* by John T. Flynn. The initial series we titled, *Twelve Candles*, using the theme, "It

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is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." (An old Chinese proverb made famous in the United States by THE CHRISTOPHERS.) Titles of more than 100 books have been circulated among our members. The original listing the Society called, "One Hundred Steps to the Truth." Members are asked to read a book a month in order to become well informed with facts.

To this end, and for this same purpose, we have study programs, an American Opinion Bureau to counterbalance the widespread availability of liberal spokesmen, and we have conducted "Our Council Speaks" Seminars across the country. Channeling the truth through these media has been a most effective measure in our overall educational program.

The Politician, from which a few short sentences were so widely quoted during the smear in 1961, without any reference to, or suggestion of documentation, has now been published by Robert Welch. But while the liberal-oriented press was quick to quote from the unpublished manuscript, the published book has yet to be reviewed in its press, even though it carried the advertisement. Another indication of the silence of the press.

THE MOVEMENT TO IMPEACH EARL WARREN

The monthly bulletin sent to all members of the Society, in addition to its educational features, contains an agenda. Two of our long-range projects, which have heaped the venom of the liberal-oriented and the Communist press upon us are: The Movement to Impeach Earl Warren and Get the United States Out of the United Nations.

Because we are a Constitutional Republic, not a democracy, and all power is not vested in the Federal government, our officials are accountable for the manner in which they uphold their oath to defend the Constitution. The impeachment process is provided in our Constitution. It is as legitimate and as proper a part of our governmental system as is the ballot. It is simply an arraignment by the House of Representatives. And removal from office or any other penalty would depend entirely on the trial held in the Senate as prescribed in the Constitution.

In a series of what has come to be known as "Red Mondays," the Supreme Court ruled so favorably for the Communist position that they, in fact, held a rally in September 1957 to, in the words of THE WORKER, "pay honor to the U.S. Supreme Court and its recent decisions" and "to hit out at attempts to undo the decisions."

Criticism of the Warren Court has been long and sustained, including the powerful "Report of the Conferences of Chief Justices" in 1958, the "Report of the American Bar Association Special Committee on Communist Tactics, Strategy and Objectives" in that same year and the excellent book *Nine Men Against America* written by Rosalie Gordon. The Society has made all of this educational material and much more available in its Movement to Impeach Earl Warren.

The INDIANAPOLIS STAR in 1957 put it well: "The easiest place to destroy the Constitution is in the United States Supreme Court. Fortunately, America has had few occasions to recall this elementary truth, yet today there is great need to remember it. A long roll call of recent Supreme Court opinions threatens to drastically alter the shape of American government. Our vulnerability through the court needs the understanding of every thoughtful citizen if it is to be overcome . . ."

The Society believes that as more Americans participate in our educational program they, too, will come to realize that "the greatest single offender in breaking down our Constitution and —let us repeat— in handing to the Communists what they themselves have called the greatest victories they have ever won in America, has been Chief Justice Earl Warren. He ought to be impeached." (September 1963 Bulletin) The Prayer Case decision and Earl Warren's recent rejection of the words, "In God We Trust" for the Supreme Court building strengthen our convictions.

In their 1960 Statement on "The Need for Personal Responsibility" our Bishops defined as a "duty of citizens" to judge and evaluate . . . according to objective norms of morality" and

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"to make proper representation of such judgment to their respective governments."

In their 1963 Statement on "Bonds of Union" our Bishops stated: "In our education, religious elements have gradually been eliminated by judicial interpretation." And they issued this strong admonition: "But the people must be vigilant, too, lest the courts however unconsciously and with whatever lofty intent, annul the original determination that ours be a government of laws, not of men. Our courts must see that the law of the land is so interpreted as to be free of undue influence of particular schools of thought . . . Unless the Declaration of Independence is taken to mean what it says about inalienable rights and their divine origin; unless the salute to the flag, including Lincoln's phrase, 'under God' is uttered without tongue in cheek; unless the plain intent of the Constitution is wholeheartedly endorsed—any talk of 'law and order' is worse than poor public policy; it is hypocrisy."

In 1926 in their "Statement on Mexico," our Bishops praised the religious guarantees in our Constitution, a guarantee they felt was so secure that "no one now seriously believes that it could be changed. It has become an accepted and highly esteemed part of our national life . . . it has stood the test of nearly one and one half centuries, and the American people today are undoubtedly more than ever convinced of the desirability of its continuance." The confidence of 1926 has been reduced in 1963 to a stern warning that without vigilance we may well become a government of men and not a government of laws. Through our educational program The John Birch Society is determined to stem this tide.

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION

Another of the Society's long-range projects is directed to getting the United States out of the United Nations and the United Nations out of the United States.

The aim of the Society, less government, more responsibility and a better world, precludes any support of "more government and a more centralized one world government . . . It is automatically contrary to everything we stand for, and one of the movements we shall oppose with all the strength we can. An honestly intended federation of nations, in some later years or decades, for the legitimate purpose of increasing the freedom of individuals, goods and cultures to cross national boundaries, and hence for the very purpose of decreasing governmental restrictions on individuals, is something we would support with all our hearts." (BLUE BOOK of The John Birch Society)

But because the United Nations is geared for and moving toward a socialized one world government, we oppose it. In the voluminous materials published by the United Nations and the myriad organizations propagandizing for its acceptance, even the remote possibility of world government evolving through the UN, is submerged in platitudes about self-determination, equal rights, emerging nations, peace and security.

The very prominent American Association for the United Nations and its executive director, Clark M. Eichelberger is a case in point. Nowhere in the AAUN material or in the books on the UN Mr. Eichelberger has written, is there talk about world government *per se*. But when writing for the ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE he leaves no doubt where his sympathies lie. He wrote on "World Government Via The United Nations." His opening paragraph reads: "The answer to the subject of World Government via the United Nations can, according to my point of view, be given easily. World government has evolved and will evolve through the United Nations as the people are willing for it to evolve. The process has already begun."

Other organizations, like the Foreign Policy Association refer to a "new world order under the United Nations." A study made for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund by a panel chaired by Dean Rusk, who at that time (1959) was the President of the Rockefeller Foundation and is presently our Secretary of State, includes this statement: "The UN stands, finally, as a symbol of the world order that will one day be built."

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This same panel, chaired by Dean Rusk, defined that also. It is a "new world order in all its dimensions—spiritual, economic, political, social."

While the liberal-oriented communications media ignores statements such as these, they were quick to report that Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*—and addressed to the whole world—endorsed world government. This is erroneous. In point of fact, Pope John again calls attention to the principle of subsidiarity and again in unequivocal terms: "The public authority of the world community is not intended to limit the sphere of action of the public authority of the individual political community, *much less to take its place*. On the contrary, its purpose is to create, on a world basis, an environment in which the public authorities of each political community, its citizens and intermediate associations, can carry out their tasks, fulfill their duties and exercise their rights with greater security . . ." And, not to be overlooked, he chose to use the future tense in expressing his "earnest wish that the United Nations Organization *may* become ever more equal to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks." He did not say it had or was. (italics added)

In like manner, and of equal importance, is the 1956 Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII, which has been used so often as *carte blanche* approval of the United Nations. True, Pope Pius did state: "We desire to see the authority of the United Nations strengthened . . ." However, in order to understand this passage, it is necessary to recall that this lengthy Christmas Message was the outpouring of a heart "saddened" by the treachery to which Hungary had just been subjected in a ruthless suppression by Communist forces. And it is necessary to realize that the Pope's reference to the United Nations was but a fraction of his total plea for a return to "true realism, Christian realism, which embraces with the same sureness man's dignity and his limits . . ."; and to realize that it was a rejection of the "false realism which strikes at the roots of private and public morality . . ."

The Pope, far from endorsing the actually existing United Nations, was indicating to the world its most grave defect, namely, its disinclination to enforce the absolute right of freedom for the Hungarian nation because of the "false realism" of many of its members. He did not call for a "strengthening" of the false realism in the UN that so saddened him but clearly asked for Christian realism.

False realism continues to dominate the UN. Since 1956 we have witnessed the tragedies of Cuba and Goa where the UN proved ineffective and unwilling to support Christian realism, and Katanga, where it itself was the force of destruction.

The United Nations is presented as an instrument of peace, but the truth of the matter is that the greatest Communist expansion has occurred since the UN Charter was signed. Prior to 1945, Communist Russia had swallowed up Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Karelian Isthmus of Finland. Since the Charter was signed they have subjugated: Albania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, Manchuria, East Germany, China, Tibet, North Laos and Cuba.

These nations, particularly those of Eastern Europe, in the Christian tradition with their centuries-old cultures and established forms of government, were abandoned to the tyranny of Godless Communism, while the UN counts as achievement, the independence granted to peoples with little or no knowledge of parliamentary proceduces, with little or no background in orderly justice and with little or no experience in established government. It counts as achievement the independence granted to states such as Indonesia which the Dutch were forced to relinquish to the Marxist dictator, Sukarno.

These historical facts coupled with myriad others, such as Alger Hiss' prominent role in the UN formation, and the Communist espionage system in the UN prove beyond a doubt that it is an instrument for Communist world domination, and not an instrument for peace—peace as understood by honorable men.

In the Bishops' Statement, "The Need for Personal Responsibility" they state: "... we must understand clearly that the citizens of this Country, and of all countries, have a responsibility to judge and to evaluate the UN deliberations and

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decisions according to objective norms of morality universally binding."

Members of The John Birch Society are asked to "keep the moral criterion constantly in mind. All the questions that arise as to the various ways of opposing Communism and of fighting the Communists . . . should be answered by asking another question: Is it morally right? And the decision, to support or oppose, should be based on the answer to that question. This is the only yardstick on which we could all possibly agree." (September 1963 Bulletin)

Using morality as the yardstick, The John Birch Society holds to the conviction that the United States must get out of the UN. We are convinced that as more Americans apply moral judgment they will support our conviction.

THE TIME HAS COME

At our recent meeting, the Council of The John Birch Society formulated the plans for the ad, "The Time Has Come," that has appeared in many papers across the country. The Communist organs have made scurrilous references to it, which indicates we hit them where it hurts.

We pointed out: "The President of the United States has been murdered by a Marxist-Communist within the United States . . . The Honorable J. Edgar Hoover said in a speech on October 18, 1960: 'We are at war with the Communists, and the sooner each red-blooded American realizes that the better and safer we will be.' He emphatically repeated this statement on December 3, 1963—ten days after the assassination . . . For five years The John Birch Society has said that, regardless of the external threat, Communism was a serious internal menace in the United States. And we were right. This has been proven, tragically but conclusively, to the deep sorrow, but also to the profound alarm, of all good Americans . . . The John Birch Society is an *educational* army and our only weapon is the truth. But George Washington stated our problem well: 'Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light'. . . For there is nothing the Communists fear so much in the whole world today as having the American people learn, too soon, the truth about their purposes, their methods, and their progress. If you oppose the Communist conspiracy by learning and spreading the truth, you may expect to be smeared as viciously as we have been for five years. But you will be helping to save your family and your country from the same cruel tyranny that has alread been imposed on a billion human beings." (italics in original)

The "Masters of Deceit" have encountered a formidable foe in The John Birch Society.

And also, we expect criticism from those who place emphasis on the ever-growing power of government and who suppose that coexistence with Communism is feasible. While we, like all others, prefer praise to criticism, we expect it as the expected reward for those who oppose what has gained so many adherents. We are confident that the validity of our course and the sincerity of our dedication will ultimately win the acceptance of all those who would preserve our Constitutional Republic under God with its recognition of the innate dignity of the individual.

For as Robert Welch said: "The Communists, and not we, have forced upon this world today a situation where truly "he who is not with me is against me." For the sins of omission by ourselves help the enemy as well as do sins of commission. And the responsibility to those that come after us, which we now face, is staggering in its immensity and its import . . . We must decide—or it will surely be decided without us and against us—which we wish our children and their children to worship, the god of hate, or the God of Love, through all the days to be." (From the speech "Through All The Days To Be," April, 1961)

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John van der Zee

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE LIBERALS

JOHN VAN DER ZEE *is a free-lance writer living in California.*

SOME MONTHS AGO, a small advertisement appeared in my local newspaper offering information about the John Birch Society, with a telephone number and Post Office box to contact.

A man answered the telephone by giving its number in a courteous, direct voice. I gave my name, and said I was interested in information about the John Birch Society. He asked me to repeat my name, and I did. And my address. He offered to mail me information about the Society in a plain envelope or, he said, I could come by his place and pick it up. He operated a nursery and conservative bookstore nearby, and I told him I'd prefer to stop by and pick up the information. "I'll give you all you need," he said, "and plenty more."

That evening I drove to his address. The nursery was on a suburban shopping street, the kind where there are no bars and everything closes by six o'clock. The nursery was closed, dark. A sign above the entrance said the hours were nine to six. I knocked, but there was no answer. Next door was a small house, set back from the sidewalk behind a wire fence and groups of potted shade trees. But the gate was padlocked, and so I left.

The following Saturday morning I returned. The nursery was open for business. Plants and bright flowers flanked the open entrance, and the first spring roses and daffodils I'd seen were offered for sale. A thick-set man in a lumberjacket and a straw hat was unloading plants from a delivery truck. I went inside and asked the woman at the counter if I could speak to the proprietor. She wore rimless eyeglasses and a big man's plaid wool shirt over her housedress, and she asked me if I was a student doing a paper. I wasn't. The man outside, she said, was the proprietor, and her husband.

Along the wall nearest the counter, large cages were hung from the ceiling, and mynah birds, a form of life I'd come to associate only with zoos and certain types of saloons, squawked noisily from inside. Below the first cage back of the counter was a poster explaining the Communist domination of the United Nations, and another urging customers to buy only American-made products.

The man entered and we shook hands. He had on old gardening pants and heavy shoes. His face was clean-shaven and tanned, full and unlined, and he seemed to me a sturdy, uncomplicated man, the kind of man a bank or a loan company would like to think of as its typical customer. In the band of his straw hat he wore a red-white-and-blue button that read: "Repeal the Income Tax."

I told him I had come for information about the John Birch Society, and he interrupted his

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work and led me to a corner of his nursery that had been converted into a bookstore. A row of blue-and-white paperbacks lined the walls, including *The Life of John Birch*, and another large table in the center of the bookstore was loaded down with stacks of other publications. There was a hardcover edition of *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, and J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*. There were reprints from the Congressional Record and bound reports of the House Un-American Activities Committee. He picked out three pamphlets and gave them to me.

"We're not Nazis or Fascists or Socialists," he began. "Everything we believe is in the Constitution. We stick by the Constitution. We just wish everybody else did. But the liberals are doing away with the personal freedoms in the Constitution, and extending the power of the Federal Government. It's been going on since 1932."

"We're not anti-Negro or anti-Semitic or anti-Catholic. Once in a while a few people who feel that way become members, but when we find out how they feel, we refund their membership fees and they get out."

"These people (the liberals) have been appointing and electing their own kind and extending the power of the government. They want just one government with no authority left to the states. The Supreme Court, for instance, has been making decisions on matters which concern the states. Instead of abiding by the Constitution, they are making new laws by their decisions."

He was as smilingly pedagogical as an elementary school teacher. "Everything the Society says eventually turns out to be true. When Fidel Castro first came to power, Robert Welch said he was a Communist, and sure enough, he was. And now this fellow Betancourt in Venezuela. Welch said he was a Communist and now it's turning out to be true. And all this foreign aid that's going to these people is going to promote socialism. It has strings attached. They make socialist measures a condition of foreign aid, like this Alliance for Progress. One of the requirements is land reform, and that's nothing but socialism. Taking land away from its owners and dividing it up."

Wasn't it the Communist practice in Russia and China, I asked, to collectivize agriculture rather than to divide it up? "Exactly," he replied, "and dividing it up is the first step. They have to get the mass of the people behind them so they can get into power and do anything they want. That's why they propose things like Medicare here. Besides, it's always been that way in Latin America. Those people always have their hands out."

It takes about six or eight months of study, he said, before you could see the truth of what the John Birch Society says. He was, he said, the Chapter Leader, and the Society met at his house on Wednesday night, and I was welcome to come. I told him I'd like to, and he assured me I'd be notified.

Early the following week he telephoned me at home and reminded me that a meeting was scheduled for the coming Wednesday evening. I told him I'd be there.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE MEETING, the nursery was dark, except for the corner where the conservative books were kept. Two people, then three, then four came into the only room lit on the street and began browsing through the displayed books and periodicals. Each arrival was introduced by the Chapter Leader to the Co-Ordinator, an aggressive-looking young man named Bill in a check sportcoat. Starting time passed, and people were still arriving and browsing. Surprisingly, they were not wealthy people in expensive coats or homburg hats. For a comparatively well-off suburban community, they had a slightly tacky look to them, like a revival-meeting or wrestling-match crowd. They were not the people who ride the commute train to San Francisco and get ahead by reading *The Wall Street Journal*. There was a skinny man with a hayshaker haircut who wore his white shirt collar spread out over his suit coat. His wife, a short, gray woman in a gray coat, stood beside him bashfully. Three women entered together, chatty, fortyish, dowdy. One wore slacks. Another had her hair in curlers beneath a scarf. There seemed to be little rapport between the members. Individuals spoke only with the Chap-

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ter Leader or Co-Ordinator, exchanging anecdotes: How John Rousselot had squelched a heckler during a speaking engagement; or about a local minister who was peddling a left-wing line.

After fifteen people had arrived, the Chapter Leader led us into a small back room crowded with worn couches and unsprung easy chairs. We stood, placed our hands over our hearts, and pledged allegiance to the flag. Everybody sank into the seats, and the Chapter Leader again introduced Bill the Co-Ordinator, who was to conduct the meeting.

"I'm eliminating the usual discussion of 'Cliches of Socialism,' " Bill began, flashing a college ring, "and instead I'd like to review some of the recent newspaper attacks on the Society." He recounted a story about a man in a nearby town who had become embroiled in a local political issue. A rock had been thrown through his window. The incident had been reported under the headline "Birch Foe Attacked," and it had later been proved that the Society was in no way connected with the rock throwing. He cited other references in the press to "John Birch Society tactics" and "Birchism" as typical smears by a hostile press designed to discredit the organization.

More people arrived. There were twenty-two eventually, fourteen men and eight women. The women, with one exception, were middle-aged. One man had brought his teen-aged son.

Bill began a brief description of the Society's organization and purpose, how its founder, Robert Welch, had given up a successful business career to devote his time and purse to the Fight Against Communism; how he, along with a council of Distinguished Americans, had come

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On a recent trip through the Far West, veteran newsman William Flynn investigated the strength of the John Birch Society and came to the following conclusions:

"Members of the John Birch Society in the West are few in number. They are pathetically ineffective as a political force. They seldom if ever are trusted by those who practice the art of the possible—politics.

"The Radical Right is a vocal force in the conservative Rocky Mountain and mid-western states, but its activities are limited largely to sponsoring *The Dan Smoot Report*, *Lifeline*, and the *Manion Report* on radio and television stations. It cannot elect a candidate to public office."

NOTE: *All subsequent quotations are supplied by Mr. Flynn.*

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to found the Society and set up its administrative machinery; and how the Society was organized in chapters like this one under chapter leaders who were under district coordinators, area coordinators and major coordinators directly responsible to the John Birch Society headquarters in Massachusetts.

"The Society is authoritarian," Bill said, "in the sense that a religion is authoritarian, requiring direction from the top. It is monolithic, of a rock-like singlemindedness in its purpose: less government, more individual responsibility and a better world. The dangers of authoritarian control are limited by the necessity of the member's consent. No one is ever commanded to do something against his better judgment or his conscience.

"For example, you've all heard or read about Mr. Welch's suggestion that General Eisenhower might have been a 'conscious agent of the Communist Conspiracy.' I personally don't agree with this opinion of Mr. Eisenhower."

However, Bill explained, Mr. Welch's opinion of Eisenhower was published in *The Politician*, an unofficial book on politics written by the founder of the authoritarian, monolithic John Birch Society, as opposed to *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, the official book on politics written by the founder of the authoritarian monolithic John Birch Society. Therefore, members could accept or reject the opinions in the unofficial book. Both books were on sale in the bookstore outside. "In short," said Bill, "if a Communist refuses to do what he is told, he gets a bullet in the back. If a member of the John Birch Society refuses to do what he is asked, we give him his money back."

The group chuckled, and a woman in glasses who was sitting next to Bill nodded her head in agreement.

"The Society," he continued, "supports no political party and endorses no candidates for public office. Members are encouraged to take an active role in politics in line with their personal beliefs, to participate in civic groups like the P.T.A. and to write letters, preferably letters of encouragement to people publicly active in the War Against Communism."

His speech ended, Bill closed his cloth binder and asked if there were any questions. No hands were raised. The woman next to him who had been nodding finally said, "Tell them about John Birch."

Briefly, Bill summarized the life of John Birch, a Protestant missionary in China, who had been "a major force" in turning the tide of World War II in that country against the Japanese. His patriotic activities there had made him a marked man, and at the close of the war he was treacherously slaughtered by the Chinese Communists, supposedly still our allies at the time. He died a martyr to Communist treachery and Allied incompetence. News of his death was suppressed in the highest government circles until Robert Welch exposed the tragedy in a *Saturday Evening Post* article and a biography of Birch on sale in the bookstore outside.

The group was silent, brooding over the loss, and again the Co-Ordinator asked for questions. I raised my hand and asked why it was, if the Society was a partnership between its leadership and the individual members (he had so described it), that the leadership could speak for the members but the members could not speak for the leadership.

"This is a protective arrangement," Bill replied. "Its purpose is to shield the individual member from being misled and misquoted by the press." He added that individual members were not bound by the leadership's statements and that they could always resign and get their money back. Did that answer my question? Not completely. I asked what the John Birch Society's attitude was, on behalf of its members, toward the encyclical issued by Pope John urging support of the United Nations, disarmament, and an end to colonialism and racial segregation.

"All I know about the encyclical," Bill said, "is what I've seen in the press, and I have reason to believe that there are errors in the translation."

I MENTIONED that the encyclical was a letter sent by the Pope to his bishops all over the world. Bill replied that his conservative Catholic friends were waiting to form an opinion about the encyclical, that there had been errors in the

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translation of the previous one, *Mater et Magistra* (he said it twice), and that the Society probably wouldn't express an opinion on it one way or another anyhow. Heads nodded. The question had been answered to everybody's satisfaction, but mine.

A heavy silence wore the question period to a close. The members had come for answers, not to ask questions. They had come and they had been reassured.

The meeting ended without ceremony. Members and guests drifted out of the room, some lingering at a table where drinks (soft) and cookies (hard) were served. A moist-eyed man with whiskey on his breath told me the Society had been the best thing that had ever happened to him. I believed it. A pleasant, clean-cut young man I had noticed during the meeting approached me. He was better dressed than the other members, better dressed than me. We talked, and our conversation soon turned to General Eisenhower. He had no doubts, the young man said, that Eisenhower was indeed a Communist agent. "The whole story is fully documented in *The Politician*. He rose from Lieutenant Colonel to Four-Star General in three years, during which he was a close friend of Anna Rosenberg. He abandoned one and a half million Eastern European refugees to repatriation behind the Iron Curtain. He established a chair of Polish studies at Columbia University." All this, he said, was fully footnoted and documented in the book.

"Individual John Birch Society members," he continued, "have a particular area of interest. Mine is the U.N." It was, he felt, a gigantic swindle. Did I know that the head of the U.N. Police Force was a Russian General? No. The last five men to head the U.N. Police Force were Russian Generals. "Alger Hiss wrote that into the U.N. Charter."

"If the last five men to head the Police Force were Russian Generals," I said, "then a Russian General was head of the U.N. force that intervened in Korea and opposed a Communist army." Right. The Russian General had then resigned his U.N. post to serve as an adviser to the North Korean Army and successfully continued his efforts to drain America of blood and treasure in a war which was a national disgrace.

Shocking as the whole mess seemed, he told me, I would begin to see the light when I read *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. The book had made him begin to see what was really going on in the world. Everybody, he said, should find out about it regardless of his political beliefs. Goodness knows, he held no bitterness against liberals. "Some of my best friends are liberals," he said.

Numbed, I drifted away, not thinking to ask him how he'd feel if his sister married one. I drove home.

I had gone to the meeting expecting secrecy, ritual, even colored shirts or armbands. There were none. No one had raised his voice or spoken out of turn. No one had really questioned anything, but me. I was the only rebel in that folksy group, and I had been dealt with as patronizingly as an atheist in church. The atmosphere was, indeed, churchlike. There were the Forces of Good (the Republic) matched against the Forces of Evil (the Communist Conspiracy). The Communists were dark, diabolical, inhumanly clever, unscrupulous. They could assume forms of friendliness or innocence, all the better to tempt the Faithful. The world was mired in sin, half Communist and neutralist (Communist in disguise), and the other half sinking fast, save a few who had received the Revealed Word. Believe, said the pamphlets, the speakers, the members; support the Constitution; pledge the flag; sing the National Anthem. Obey your heart and don't let the Communists seize your mind, and the Forces of Evil will wither and die.

A week passed. I was notified by telephone of another meeting, and I went. The composition of the group had changed. There were only about twelve people in all. One was a tall woman in a plaid wool shirt and blue jeans, who was wearing a neck brace. There was a noisy young man with a bad complexion who smoked a pipe. The meeting was conducted this time by the Area Co-Ordinator, a youthful, lean, well-dressed man with crew-cut black hair. Young executive timber.

We were to see a filmed speech by Robert

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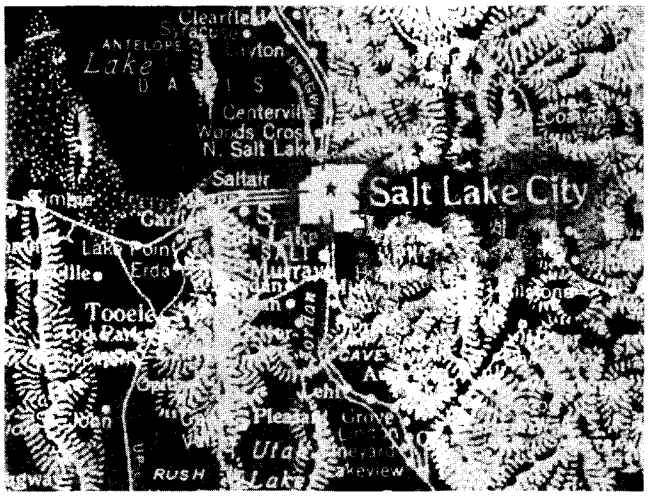
Welch, and a screen was pulled down and chairs set up amongst the stacked publications in the bookstore. As before, people straggled in and browsed. And, as before, the meeting started late. I bought a copy of *The Blue Book*, and leafed through *The Politician*. It was indeed documented. There was an appendix, page after page of references to *American Opinion* (the Society's periodical), *The American Mercury*, Eisenhower's wartime speeches and proclamations, *Life*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The New York Times*.

The meeting began. Somehow it opened on the subject of Betancourt and Venezuela. There was another rebel in the house. The Area Co-Ordinator said there had been an explosion in the Venezuelan oil fields, plotted by the Venezuelan President. A tweedy, articulate man, apparently a newcomer, had a question. "How was the responsibility for the incident pinned on Betancourt?"

The Co-Ordinator put one foot up on the seat of a chair and explained that Venezuela's President had sent secret agents out to sabotage Venezuelan oil facilities. "Why," asked the newcomer, "did he blow up his own country's oil facilities, and if he did, why wasn't it in the paper?" The Co-Ordinator explained that the plot was a ruse to gain sympathy for Betancourt as an anti-Communist and that the incident had not been reported factually in the press because the news was controlled. The Council on Foreign Relations, he said, shaped our foreign policy and managed our news media. "Do you know that Henry Luce and General Sarnoff are members of the Council on Foreign Relations?" We did not. Exposure. Tenaciously, the questioner continued. "I am," he admitted, "a conservative.

UTAH



In Utah, which has never been a cradle of liberalism, the spokesmen of the Radical Right can't win at the polls.

Salt Lake City Mayor J. Bracken Lee has endorsed the John Birch Society, but this hasn't helped it politically. The Society's official organizer in Utah is Reed Benson, an elder of the Latter Day Saints Church, who was defeated for a Congressional seat and chastised by his ecclestical superiors for attempting to use the Church to further his political ambitions.

The Mormons have also criticized Benson's father, Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture and one of the Church's Twelve Apostles.

Benson warmly endorsed his son's calling to the John Birch Society which he considers "the most effective non-church organization in our fight against creeping socialism and godless communism." The First Presidency of the Mormon Church promptly issued a statement deploring "the presumption of some politicians, especially officers, co-ordinators and members of the John Birch Society, who undertake to align the Church and its leadership with their partisan views."

The Birchers were elated when they got Utah native son and now Governor of Michigan George Romney to speak at an anti-Communist school. But Romney made his sponsors decidedly unhappy when he said that Communism was not the only problem plaguing the nation and urged more attention to problems of race relations and unemployment.

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And I can understand the possibility that the President of Venezuela is a Communist. But why," he wondered, "would a man blow up his own oil fields to gain sympathy instead of doing it in some other way less harmful to himself?"

The Co-Ordinator explained that Communist methods were devious and complex and that, as Lenin had said, they would always "take one step backward to move two steps forward." An oil-field explosion or some other apparent reverse was actually a calculated loss designed to bring a double victory in the near future. Events were never what they seemed to be.

THE DISCUSSION came to a close or, more accurately, a truce. The lights were turned off and the movie projector turned on. Robert Welch materialized on the screen. He stood at a rostrum, a black-and-white man on black-and-white film, somber-suited, old, alert. He introduced himself in a soft voice with a Southern exposure. Most people were surprised, he began, to see that he didn't have horns. He didn't. But the fringe of white hair around his all-but-bald head did remind me of a halo.

Mr. Welch outlined the principles and goals of the Society in the same fashion I'd heard the week before. And in almost the same words, even to the adage of giving a man his money back instead of a bullet in case of disagreement. It was an impressive performance. He spoke for over an hour at a camera facing him from a single, monotonous angle, interrupted by only one noticeable film cut and a pause for a sip of water.

The group listened, silent, respectful, the faces greyed by the glow from the close screen. Mr. Welch climaxed his talk with a four-point plan of action: (1) the establishment of reading rooms on the Christian Science model, "selective," rather than "exhaustive," as to the books available; (2) spreading the truth about recent history and current events by expanding the circulation of conservative periodicals; (3) support of radio programs such as those of Fulton Lewis and Clarence Manion, encouraging their sponsors, and helping to raise money when absolutely necessary to keep them on the air; and (4) the organization of letter-writing campaigns, planned, directed, checked and evaluated by a central headquarters or director.

He closed with an admonition to act, for time was running out for the Republic.

The lights went on and we sat, weak-eyed. The Area Co-Ordinator turned a chair around and sat backwards in it, facing the group. "Mr. Welch," he admitted, "is a tough act to follow. The man is a genius. A special law was passed in North Carolina admitting him to the state university at fourteen. He is a master chess player and fluent in several languages. I spent two days with Mr. Welch last year at Monterey, and his powers of reason made my head spin."

The Co-Ordinator then presented a packet of a dozen suppressed books. *The Dozen Candles*, recommended reading for every American. He gave a capsule synopsis of each: *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, a diplomatic exposé by a former U.S. Ambassador; a volume by a Major Racey Jordan, revealing Harry Hopkins' collusion with the Russians during World War II; a book exposing the Communist spy ring that tricked the Japanese into attacking Pearl Harbor; a lengthy attack on the State Department, originally launched by Senator Joseph McCarthy on the floor of the Senate; a recent history of the Supreme Court.

The tweedy troublemaker had a question. "Is it true that McCarthy's attack on the State Department didn't result in a single conviction?" "Yes," replied the Co-Ordinator. "McCarthy's committee could only investigate, find evidence and recommend prosecution to the Attorney General. The State Department investigation was halted by an Executive Order issued by President Eisenhower on May 17, 1954."

"May 17, 1954? Wasn't that the date," the young man with the pipe piped, "of the Supreme Court desegregation decision?"

"Right," said the Co-Ordinator. "See how it all fits together? The Supreme Court desegregation decision was a smoke screen covering up the Executive Order." We'd been tricked again.

This tortuous logic must be Mr. Welch's. My head had begun to spin. The Co-Ordinator began enumerating Chief Justice Earl Warren's and

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General Eisenhower's offenses. Earl Warren had voted "for the conspiracy" in 63 out of 65 cases. Justice Hugo Black had voted "for the conspiracy" in 102 out of 102 cases. Although his administration had been vilified, "President Eisenhower was not personally attacked once in the pages of *The Daily Worker* during his eight years in office."

I raised my hand. "What about at the 1960 Summit Conference," I said, "when Premier Khrushchev attacked President Eisenhower politically and said that the President 'gave off a stink'?" "Yes," answered the Co-Ordinator, "and didn't that make you feel sympathy for Eisenhower?" That was precisely the calculated effect. It was the same tactic used in the Venezuelan oil-field bombing to gain support for Betancourt. All I had to do was read the other side, the Society's publications and the suppressed books, and I would begin to see the truth.

We had come full circle, back to the domestic danger by way of Venezuela. Round and round went the discussion, spinning off facts half air like cotton candy; a hidden motive behind an apparent Communist setback; a "neutral" leader who was really Red; an incriminating statement made by a former Secretary of State quoted from a publication earlier described as "slanted"; a Supreme Court decision that had allowed an American Communist to skip the country. Halfway through each answer by the Co-Ordinator, the heads began to nod in agreement. People fought with each other to deliver the reply. But only the tweed man, the rebel, the outsider, asked the questions. Always his sources were discredited. There was nothing solid to stand upon or grasp. The room was full of cotton candy. It flew back and forth and everybody got a little on him. "One of the Communist goals," said the young man with a pipe in a voice as persistently annoying as an air compressor, "is to destroy our taste in art with all this so-called modern art and abstract art. I've even seen it in my church."

Glutted with cotton candy, I left, taking with me my own new copy of *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. All my questions had been answered, in a way. It had been a free political discussion, in a way. And even if I disagreed with the Society and agreed with all it stood against, it didn't mean I was a Communist conspirator. I could be just another liberal dupe. Which term, in the final analysis, has a more unfavorable connotation?

Three women were leaving at the same time I was, among them the big woman in the lumberjack shirt and neck brace. She spoke hotly of the man in tweeds who'd been asking all the questions. "Somebody ought to tell that fella to take a high-school civics course."

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Victor Ferkiss

CATHOLICS AND THE RADICAL RIGHT

VICTOR FERKISS, *an Associate Professor of Government at Georgetown University, is the author of* Communism Today: Belief and Practice *(Paulist Press, 1962). Dr. Ferkiss has served as a Consultant to the Peace Corps and has been a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow. His articles have appeared in* The Commonweal, The Nation, America, Thought *and others.*

THE RELATIVE POSITIONS of all of the major figures and forces in American politics have shifted dramatically since the tragic death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy last November, and the outlines of the new political situation are only beginning to emerge, but without question the radical right is among the forces most affected by Kennedy's assassination. The nation's initial assumption, based on the well-deserved reputation of Dallas as a hotbed of right-wing-inspired disrespect for authority and order, was that the President had died at the hands of a right-wing fanatic. Though this assumption was soon proved wrong, with the assassin turning out to be an extremist of the left rather than of the right, the shock experienced by the American people at the President's violent death has hurt the radical right as well as the radical left. The John Birch Society has sought to capitalize upon the assassination by claiming that President Kennedy was the victim of a Communist acting under orders of the American Communist party (thus demonstrating the validity of the Birchite thesis that it is the internal Communist menace rather than the external one that we need to fear), but their belated and false accusation has apparently found little acceptance among Americans. Indeed, one of the most remarkable facts about the President's death is that the revelation of his murderer's Marxist sympathies has produced so little in the way of anti-Communist hysteria. A recent Gallup Poll indicates that the deep shock of President Kennedy's assassination has resulted instead in increased public awareness of the perils of political extremism—an awareness and condemnation extending equally to extremism of both the right and the left.

American politics—even the politics of extremist groups—tends to be based more on opposition to individuals and groups than on support of them, and the character of right-wing extremism has always drastically altered whenever the Republic's chief office, the presidency, has changed hands. Regardless of the direction in which his policies and actions may in fact lead, President Lyndon Johnson has a background and style which make him a less likely target than Kennedy for the fear and hatred of those individuals and groups susceptible to appeals from the extreme right; the sharp decline in enthusiasm for the presidential candidacy of Senator Barry Goldwater since Johnson's accession bears witness to this fact. Perhaps then this is an es-

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pecially good time to attempt to assess the role and meaning of the radical right in American life and especially to examine the much mooted question of the contribution of American Catholics to the cause of right-wing extremism. The election and presidency of John Kennedy, the first of their faith to achieve the highest position in American life, was bound to affect the political attitudes of Catholics, but how permanent and deep the effect has been, time alone can tell.

Despite a plethora of scientific and statistical studies on almost every facet of American politics, we have little hard data on which to base a discussion of the radical right. What is true of the radical right in general is even more true of Catholics within it. However, certain aspects of Catholic participation in right-wing movements are plain enough to the naked eye; and most sensitive and informed observers of American life would be likely to agree on the character of this participation. Just as the radical right has been a small but noisy minority within American life generally, gaining a public attention and importance out of all proportion to the number of its adherents, so also a small but noisy minority of Catholics who have been leaders in right-wing activities have wielded a disproportionate influence within American Catholic life because of lingering elements of authoritarianism in the American Catholic community and because of particular social and psychological characteristics of American Catholics.

The difficulty of talking sense about the contribution of Catholics to right-wing extremism lies as much in questions of definition as in the absence of data. Who or what is a "right-wing extremist" or a member of the "radical right"? One man's extremism is another man's moderation, and there is always a danger of falling into a kind of McCarthyism, even if in reverse, in which one attacks political positions and groups simply because they promote views different from one's own. After all, the cutting off of foreign aid, repeal of the income tax, and withdrawal from the United Nations—regardless of the moral or practical bases on which one might disapprove of such measures—are positions which Americans, including Catholics, have as much right to advocate as they do nationalization of industry, unilateral disarmament, or world federalism. What distinguishes the extremist from the moderate—in the American context especially—is not so much his substantive views as the means he advocates for achieving his goals, his attitude toward those who disagree with him, and his respect for and faith in established political procedures. The one thing which unites both the extreme left and the extreme right is despair of ever reaching their goals through the normal political means available to dissidents within the American system—a despair usually based, in both cases, upon a conspiracy theory of history which posits some sinister force (the capitalist class or the Communist apparatus) which so dominates both the organs of government and the media of public communication that the only means available for saving the country are counter conspiracy, stealth, innuendo, deliberate deception of the public, mass action outside the normal channels of political advocacy, or even violence.

For the men and women of the radical right the Communist conspiracy which threatens to destroy us is primarily internal rather than external. America's strength is unsurpassable. If it were not for blindness and treason in high places, out external enemies would hold no threat for us. It is not the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China but the sinister influence exerted by the traitors in our midst that is the real danger, and their influence is so all pervasive that it cannot be fought by normal political means, for the Communist conspiracy dominates both the American political parties and controls all three branches of government. This despair of the normal procedures of politics for resolving differences is the hallmark of the political extremist of either right or left.

IT IS ON THIS BASIS that one can term extremist the members of such groups as the John Birch Society, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, and such specifically Catholic contributions to political degeneracy as the Cardinal Mindszenthy Society. Not all of these movements share all of the characteristics of the radi-

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cal right in toto. Only the minuscule and aberrant Minutemen have gone to the point of drilling with weapons. In actual practice many right-wing organizations are just as much intellectually oriented, inward-turning "study groups" as their left-wing counterparts. But nonetheless all are united by a common mood, by a belief that the rules of the political game, rules based on reason and forbearance, have been misused by their enemies and therefore can licitly be broken by themselves whenever necessary to gain their ends.

Catholic participation in movements of the radical right has a relatively short but important history in contemporary American politics. Arising in response to a widespread feeling among Catholics that they, almost alone, knew the truth about the Communist danger at home and abroad, it has origins as far back as the turn of the century, but it only became an active political force in the Nineteen Thirties. The Spanish Civil War was a major watershed in the thinking of a whole political generation, and it made Catholicism and crusading anti-communism virtually synonymous. The fact that many Americans — including those in the seats of power in the nation — did not share the views of the American Catholic leadership on policy toward Communism at home and abroad not only intensified the Catholic attitude on the subject, but gave it the special twist necessary to ripen Catholics for plucking by later harvesters of the radical right: a belief that anti-Communists, although a majority, were misunderstood and even persecuted because Communists monopolized access to the founts of power in American life. The fact that Catholics themselves were still largely excluded from these same founts of power — a fact the importance of which can hardly be overestimated — further reinforced the belief that they were the victims of a conspiracy.

Catholic attitudes toward Communism gave new life and new direction to the flagging political power of Father Charles E. Coughlin, the influential Detroit "radio priest," whose largely lower class Catholic supporters were a major

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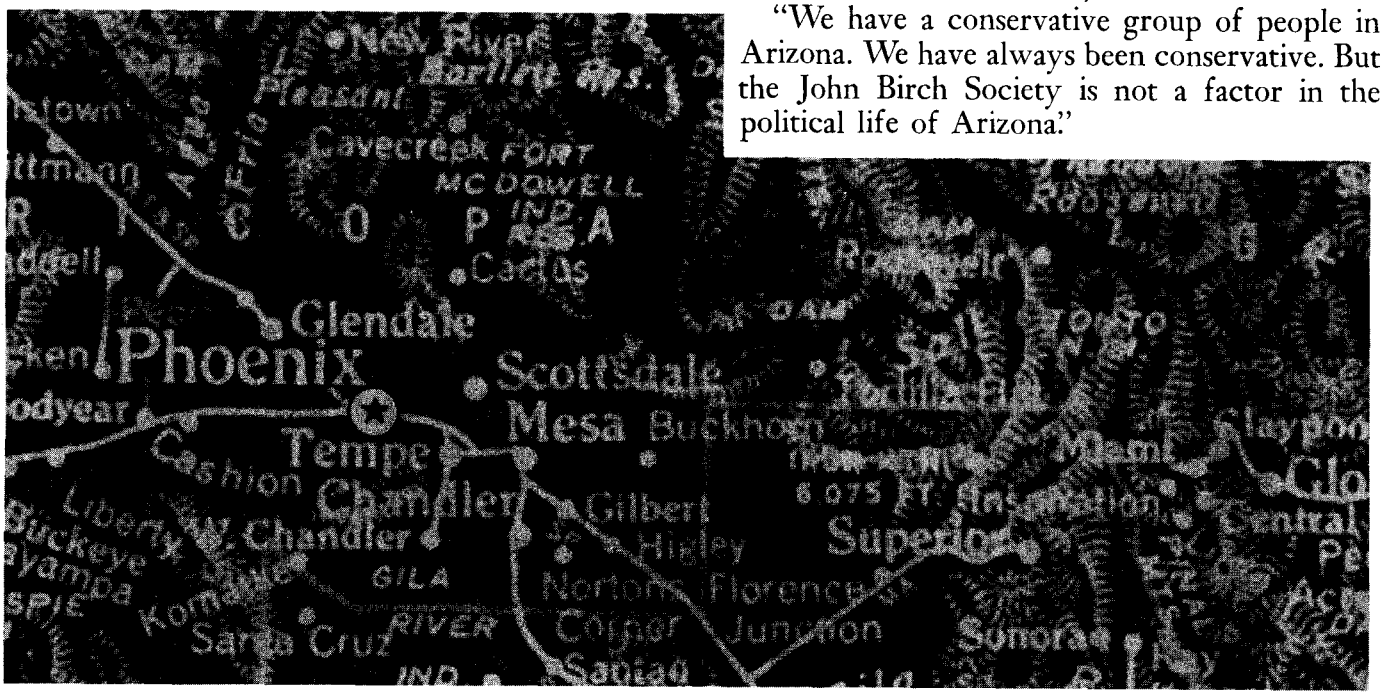
ARIZONA



Governor Paul Fanin of Arizona:
"We have a conservative group of people in Arizona. We have always been conservative. But the John Birch Society is not a factor in the political life of Arizona."

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element in the emerging radical right of the late Thirties and an important force in shaping the opposition toward American entry into World War II on the "side" of Communist Russia. Their advice rejected, many Catholics after the war ended felt that their stand had been vindicated by the gains made by Communism at the war's close, and Catholics figured prominently in the attempts to explain these Communist successes as the product of the very real, though minor, Communist influence in American official policymaking revealed by Congressional investigations. Their belief that setbacks as serious as those which had taken place in Eastern Europe and China had to be the result of more extensive Communist influence in government than had yet been revealed led many Catholics to support one of their number, Senator Joseph McCarthy, who claimed that his attempts to establish the fact of this pervasive influence were being frustrated by the very extent of this subversive control itself—that Communist domination was so strong and so widespread that the Communists controlled the Army, the State Department, the universities, and most of the press, radio and television. McCarthy was for many Catholics the symbol of their long and lonely fight to save religion and their country from its highly placed enemies—and when McCarthy was censured by the United States Senate for his tactics in that body, he was hailed as a martyr of the faith by much of the Catholic press and from many Catholic pulpits. It was only to be expected then that the revival of right-wing extremism in the latter years of the Eisenhower administration would find some support among Catholics.

A key element in the new right-wing movement is the John Birch Society, an organization cloaked in secrecy. The revelation of its existence in late 1960 shocked a good part of the nation. Much of the open public concern, especially within the Catholic community, originated with the claim of the Society's autocratic leader, Mr. Robert Welch, that forty percent of the members of the Society are Catholics. This is probably untrue. Mr. Welch has little way of knowing and his reputation for accuracy is not of the best in any event. Where support for the Society has been studied carefully the results do not reveal disproportionate Catholic sympathy for it, and it apparently has its greatest strength in areas of the country where the Catholic population is least numerous. Nonetheless, Catholics have figured importantly in its activities in various part of the country and noted Catholics have served on its board of directors. These latter include Father Raymond Ginder, longtime influential columnist of the mass-circulation weekly, *Our Sunday Visitor*, one of the most important Catholic papers in the nation, who consistently used its pages to spread right-wing propaganda for years without hint of hindrance. Also a Birch Society director is Clarence Manion, former Dean of the Notre Dame University Law School, himself the proprietor of an important right-wing organization, the Manion Forum.

In addition to their participation in the Birch Society and such specifically Catholic organizations as the Cardinal Mindszenthy Society, the Theresians, and the Catholic Freedoms Foundation, influential Catholics have lent their support to a variety of other extreme right-wing groups. Father Albert J. Nevins, editor of *Maryknoll* magazine, spoke at the New York "Crusade" of the notorious Australian Baptist lay preacher, Dr. Fred Schwarz. The Christian Crusade of the Fundamentalist Protestant minister Billy James Hargis claims that one-third of its board members are Catholics, and these include a priest, Father Joseph F. Thorning, a noted writer on Latin American affairs.

Examples of significant Catholic presence in the radical right could be cited almost indefinitely. Bishop Wright of Pittsburgh once said that one could always find more Catholics than Protestants ready to join movements to impeach Earl Warren or withdraw from the United Nations. But this is perhaps unfair. While Catholics in the Northeast may have been leaders in such movements, the radical right generally, as is true of the Birch Society in particular, has its real strength in such Protestant strongholds as the South and Southwest. Yet the impression that Catholics have a special affinity for right-wing causes persists. Why should this be so?

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IN LARGE PART, the appearance of right-wing domination of Catholic life stems from the existence of authoritarian elements embedded in the structure of the Catholic Church in America itself—elements which the friends and members of the radical right were especially ready to take advantage of as compared with their less rightist brethren. Diocesan newspapers have largely captive audiences and it is difficult for anyone but the reigning bishop to have much influence upon their editorial policy. When the organs of several of the largest dioceses and archdioceses become—as they have in Brooklyn and Los Angeles—organs of the radical right, this makes an impression upon Catholics and the public generally of massive Catholic support for the right, despite the fact that the editorial positions of many diocesan papers are either liberal or moderate on public issues. The average Catholic layman has little if any more opportunity to influence what is taught in Catholic schools or preached in Catholic pulpits than he does to influence the diocesan press. The right-wing views spread in some Catholic classrooms tend to become endowed with the authority of the school itself; and, while Catholic pastors and priests who use their pulpits and parish bulletins as media for spreading right-wing doctrine are a minority, there is no way that they can effectively be challenged by parishioners of differing views, and rare is the Catholic priest of more liberal leanings—especially among the secular clergy—who cares or dares to attempt to counter the right-wing positions sometimes expressed by his colleagues.

The attitudes of the leaders of Catholic organizations such as the Knights of Columbus (which withdrew religious advertising from a national magazine critical of Senator McCarthy) may not accurately represent the political views of their rank and file, but the latter lack either the opportunity or the incentive to protest any right-wing stands taken. The fact that decisions in typical Catholic organizations are made from the top down, with little discussion or appeal, has enabled members of the radical right to use these organizations for their own ends. Dissent on particulars has been doubly difficult because the premise of all discussion is that everything which claims to be anti-Communist is on the side of the angels and is either not subject to question or is given the overwhelming benefit of any doubt.

Not only have Catholic individuals, institutions and groups often been advocates of anti-Communism of the most dubious sort, but frequently they implicitly endorse attitudes on social and economic questions blatantly contrary to papal teachings, either through willingness to work closely with groups holding such attitudes or by operating as though negative anti-Communism constitutes the totality of Catholic social teaching. That sympathy for the radical right has not in fact been the official position of the church in America can easily be ascertained from the statements of the officers of the National Catholic Welfare Council—as nearly an official voice of the Bishops on social matters as exists. But the views of the NCWC on social questions and their temperate approach to Communism have not only been ignored by many Catholics but the statements of this body have even come to be regarded in some Catholic quarters as further expressions of the Communist conspiracy!

Accentuating the disproportionate influence of the right within American Catholic life is a phenomenon which has not yet attracted much notice. Those Catholics who have rejected the largely negative approach to the contemporary world which characterizes many Catholic groups (an attitude of which susceptibility to the doctrines of the radical right is only a special and extreme manifestation) have increasingly withdrawn from activity within the Catholic community. Partly because of despair of getting a hearing for their views within authoritarian Catholic institutions, they have chosen to operate exclusively within a broader context than the Catholic school, organization, or periodical. This withdrawal is especially evident in the Northeast and the Far West. These Catholics—including many in positions of leadership in the community at large—are much less attracted to the radical right than are the Catholics whose activities are largely confined to the Catholic community. The late President Kennedy—a man who was

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deliberately educated in non-Catholic schools, did not read the Catholic press, and had no significant ties to Catholic organizations – was symbolic of thousands of other devout Catholic leaders in American life in this respect.

American Catholicism has had these two faces for several decades, with Catholics outside of the specifically Catholic community holding more liberal attitudes, on the whole, than those within it. Even as far back as the Spanish Civil War only 40% of American Catholics, as indicated by poll data, positively favored the Franco cause at a time that it was being pushed as incontrovertibly holy by virtually every organ of American Catholic opinion. Throughout the New Deal era most American Catholics supported the Roosevelt administration – including its foreign policy – even at a time when most of the Catholic press and many of the hierarchy were denouncing it. There is no evidence that the American Catholic population at large gave significantly greater support to Senator McCarthy than did non-Catholics in terms of their proportion in the population, despite the fact that McCarthy was the darling of most of the Catholic press, clergy, and the orators of the communion breakfast circuit.

More repelled by Adlai Stevenson than the average American voter, many Catholics stopped voting Democratic in the 1952 elections. But the man they chose instead, President Eisenhower, was himself a target of the radical right as time went on and despite this held his Catholic supporters. The tremendous Catholic support for President Kennedy (he received 78% of the Catholic vote in 1960) – a man whose political attitudes and background were further from those of the radical right than those of his opponent – showed that rank and file Catholics will vote for a figure they identify as a Catholic even when – as happened in some areas – Catholic groups are trying to tar him with the brush of

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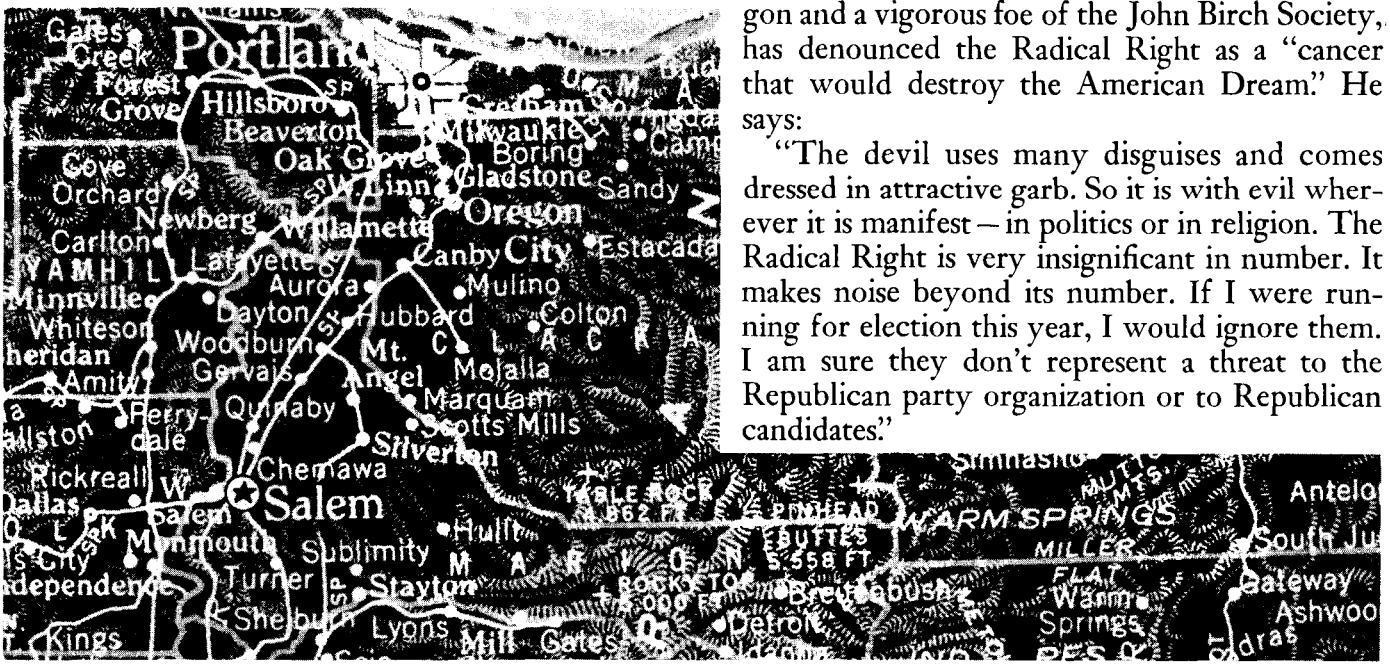
OREGON



Mark Hatfield, Republican Governor of Oregon and a vigorous foe of the John Birch Society, has denounced the Radical Right as a "cancer that would destroy the American Dream." He says:

"The devil uses many disguises and comes dressed in attractive garb. So it is with evil wherever it is manifest – in politics or in religion. The Radical Right is very insignificant in number. It makes noise beyond its number. If I were running for election this year, I would ignore them. I am sure they don't represent a threat to the Republican party organization or to Republican candidates."

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alleged left-wing sympathies. Whether this is naivete or common sense is a matter of opinion, but the American Catholic voter—like Catholics elsewhere in the world—still tends to accept the credentials of a man who goes to church regularly and is considered to be a practicing Catholic in his personal life regardless of what political ideologies in the Catholic community may say about him. That right-wing sympathies are less than dominant among American Catholics is dramatically indicated in a poll taken shortly after Lyndon Johnson became president, showing Catholics supporting him over Goldwater by the astounding margin of 91 to 6.

VIEWED IN THE PERSPECTIVE of the consistent support Catholics have traditionally given the more liberal candidate for president throughout modern American history—a record broken only in the Eisenhower-Stevenson elections—the myth of a right-wing Catholic population is easily dispelled. Studies of voting records of Catholic legislators—largely elected by Catholic constituents—corroborate this contention, although it must be kept in mind that the record of Catholic support for "liberal" figures stems primarily from Catholics' acceptance of the welfare state on the domestic scene rather than from any overwhelming rejection of chauvinism and hypersuspiciousness in international affairs. Indeed the record suggests that many Catholics have supported liberal figures despite rather than because of their stands on foreign policy, giving priority to domestic economic issues. But there is obviously no widespread popular Catholic support for the doctrine of the radical right that Communism will not conquer American from without but will take over in this country as the result of a gradual increase in power of the federal government over localities and the economy. Quite the contrary. The Catholic wing of the radical right, therefore, despite its ability to make noise, confuse issues, and injure the reputations and well-being of individuals and even of the Church itself, has about the same status within the Church as the radical right has outside it—a small aberrant sect, but with well-placed and powerful friends.

But how explain the willingness of American Catholics to tolerate the claims of the radical right to speak for them? One reason which has already been noted is the road block presented by lingering institutionalized authoritarianism within Catholic life. But equally important in understanding the influence and even the presence of the radical right within American Catholicism is an understanding of certain socio-psychological characteristics of American Catholics and of the background of the changing relations of Catholics to American life.

American Catholics were originally a poor and disadvantaged group whose behavior reflected their status and was expressed in support of the persons and political groups which stood for, or claimed to stand for, the rights and needs of the underdog. Catholics early formed the backbone of the Democratic party in the North, especially following the Civil War (abolitionism was a crusade of the white Protestant elite, for which the Irish laborer showed conspicuously little enthusiasm). Though the hierarchy leaned toward and were assiduously courted by the leaders of the dominant Republican party, the majority of the laity remained faithful to the party of "rum, Romanism, and rebellion." While rejecting anything that smelled of Marxian socialism, Catholics participated actively in American trade unionism; the willingness of the American hierarchy—aided by their English brethren—to countenance and secure Papal tolerance of Catholic membership in religiously neutral labor organizations was one of the great turning points of modern history, for not only did it keep the workers from being alienated from the Church, it also—through Catholic presence—secured that triumph of bread-and-butter unionism over Marxist ideology within American labor which has endured to the present day.

Through the subsequent decades Catholics—especially the Irish, who have long constituted the dominant element within the American Church—began to rise from the ranks of labor and into higher social and economic positions. But on the whole they continued to remain faithful to the Democratic party. During the New

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Deal era the rise of Catholics in American life accelerated. But many Catholics who had risen were eager to forget their humble origins and to identify with the financially well-to-do and socially dominant Anglo-Saxon-Protestant elite. Here they found their way barred. The Catholics who had risen the furthest and fastest learned that the pinnacles of political, intellectual and cultural power were still off limits to them. The destiny of the country was being shaped by those who taught in and attended the Ivy League colleges, who wrote for and felt at ease reading the leading newspapers and intellectual magazines, who sat in the boardrooms of the great financial institutions, who controlled the great philanthropic foundations, and who dominated such élite government agencies as the State Department. The American Establishment – the interlocking directorate of political and economic and cultural power – was, save for a few Jews in the New York intellectual world, thoroughly WASP – White Anglo Saxon Protestant. No Catholic need apply. This rejection was symbolized by the fact that the great patrician reformer – Franklin Roosevelt of Groton and Harvard – never saw fit to have the Catholic chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Jim Farley, as an overnight guest at the White House. As Mrs. Roosevelt explained it, "Franklin is not at ease with those who are not his social equals."

Resentment of the power of the Establishment and their refusal to share it with Catholics, regardless of the latter's new found wealth and its voting strength, was not the only reason for fear and hatred of the dominant élite on the part of many Catholics. American Catholicism had always – or at least since the submergence of the older American Church by large scale Irish immigration in the pre-Civil War era – been dominated by the Counter Reformation mentality in an extreme form. Not only were the American élite snobs, they were dangerous heretics and immoralists as well. To attend a non-Catholic school – especially a non-Catholic college, to read a non-Catholic book or periodical (save for the Hearst newspapers and other material on the same level), to go near the legitimate theater, was an obvious occasion of sin. The world outside – the dominant world – was sinister and dangerous. Even the professional Catholic intellectuals were captives of the anti-intellectual habit of looking at the world through "either-or" spectacles, seeing all that was not absolutely right as absolutely wrong, and anything that had happened since the Thirteenth century as necessarily degenerate and evil. The separate Catholic educational system – created at great sacrifice by American Catholics – denied by its very existence the legitimacy of the dominant American cultural institutions. The aims of the Catholic school system were to convert a proletariat into a middle class by enhancing the earning power and social graces of its students while keeping them as untouched as possible by the culture and mores of the Establishment. In the view of the world that prevailed within the Catholic ghetto, institutions such as the New York *Times* and Harvard University were hotbeds not only of anti-Catholic prejudice – which in fact they were and largely still are – but also of Communism and personal immorality. The American Catholics who went to Catholic schools and read the Catholic press were being conditioned to accept the central teachings of the radical right – that the dominant American institutions are controlled by forces subversive to God and country. It needed only a political situation in which the interests of the United States and the Soviet Union were openly opposed for these attitudes to bear fruit. The Cold War provided the opportunity. The fanatical adherence of many Catholics to McCarthyism was the response. Any present Catholic support for the radical right is a projection of these long standing attitudes and responses.

In addition to the effect of rising but insecure social status and of a defensive hostility toward the dominant culture on the part of leading segments of the Catholic population, there are almost certainly deeper psychological causes of the Catholic propensity to reject liberalism for the doctrines of the right. It has often been said that so strong is the hold of puritanism upon American culture that in this country even

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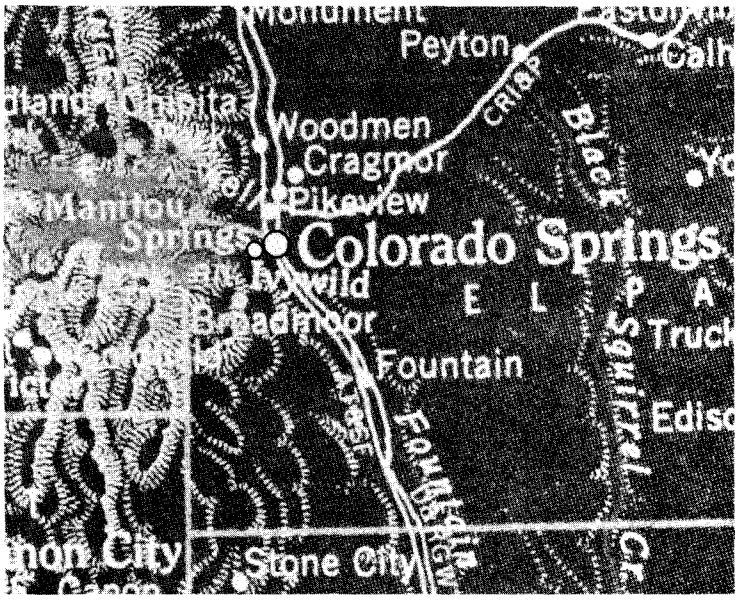

COLORADO

The red, white and blue brochures of the "University of Anti-Communism" in Colorado Springs identify its founder, Dr. Billy James Hargis of Tulsa, Oklahoma, as one of the "foremost leaders in America today in the fight against Communism and its infiltration into every facet of American life."

The university, known as "The Summit," is the reputed center of arch-conservative power in Colorado. Reporter William Flynn decided to look it up:

"Could you tell me where the Summit is," I asked a service station attendant in Colorado Springs.

"What?"

"The Summit—the anti-Communist university run by Dr. Billy James Hargis." I showed him one of the red, white and blue brochures.

"Never heard of it," the attendant said. "Just a minute and I'll look it up in the telephone book for you."

He thumbed the directory, white pages and yellow pages.

"Beats me," he said. "Can't find a thing."

The telephone company's information operator was just as mystified.

The Colorado Springs Police Department had some information. "The Summit? I think its the old Grand View Hotel on Osage in Manitou, Springs. I heard something about it," the desk sergeant said.

Inquiries at two more service stations on the road to the suburb of Manitou Springs proved futile. But the attendant at the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce Information Office had directions.

"The Summit" is a Victorian hotel that has the appearance of a haunted house. A blazing red neon sign identifies it as the University of Anti-Communism.

I arrived in mid-afternoon, and the front door was open.

The air inside was musty, and the lobby deserted. The heavy black Victorian furniture was dusty.

A large American flag dominated the room. The registration desk was covered with a complete inventory of John Birch Society literature, including packets of speeches by General Walker. A garish oil of Dr. Billy James Hargis glowered out from the shadows behind the desk.

A pencilled sign said "Call for attendant." I rapped at length on the glass registration counter, but no one appeared.

I looked around the lobby at wall signs that read:

"Guests without baggage must pay in advance."

"All bills payable weekly."

Groups of sight-seers walked by outside, but ignored the bright red sign of the deserted Anti-Communist University.

It was obvious that there was no war against Communism being waged at the Summit that day.

—*William Flynn*

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Catholics and Jews become Puritans. The Irish immigrants—who molded and still control most of the American Catholic community—brought their own brand of puritanism, largely Jansenist in origin, with them when they came.

The reality of Catholic puritanism in America has been and still is too blatant to be overlooked. Negativism and repression are the dominant elements in the psychological conditioning and makeup of most American Catholics; but impulses which are suppressed seek outlets of some kind, however transformed. The propensity to violence and hysteria bred by certain kinds of psychological repression—especially of a sexual nature—is a widespread and well documented phenomenon. The doctrines of the radical right, postulating a world filled with sinister conspiracies—covens of latter-day witches controlling all of our political and cultural life—are naturally appealing to persons with such psychological conditioning. The picture of a world in which good and evil contend in a simple and obvious way and in which good can triumph if and when some violent release takes place (McCarthy's bullying or the "Why Not Victory?" approach to nuclear warfare) is one which can easily accommodate the drives repressed by a Puritan sub-culture.

Also, the fact that in the Nineteen Forties and Fifties the issues which divided liberals and the right were increasingly issues of freedom of expression in politics and art only aggravated the linkage between Puritan upbringing and right-wing political propensities. Currently the United States, for better or worse, is undergoing a change in moral standards, at least at the level of overt expression if not actual conduct. The claims of right-wing radical groups that America is being deliberately debauched by agents of world Communism in order to destroy our ability to resist a Communist coup not only echoes a theme of the supporters of Father Coughlin in the Thirties, but makes a charge which many Catholics who are having very real difficulties in coming to terms with a culture in which traditional standards seem to be crumbling find easy to accept.

Right-wing conservatives, though not part of the radical right properly speaking, bear much the same relationship to it that many American liberal organizations and activities bore to the Communist party in the Thirties and Forties. Although the extreme conservatives may view their allies of the radical right with distaste, they still feel that their hearts are pure, or, as Senator Goldwater has put it, "There are many fine people in the Birch Society." Many extreme conservative groups are infiltrated by or serve as "transmission belts" if not actual fronts for the radical right. And to some degree the very existence of extreme conservative movements serves to protect the activities and status of the radical right by giving currency to certain ideas and creating a climate of opinion in which members of the radical right are regarded as basically sound though perhaps somewhat lacking in judgment or wrong on a few minor points.

That well-to-do and formally well-educated Catholics are important in the so-called conservative "revival" in contemporary American politics and thought is beyond question and has been noted by students of American ideas of as widely differing persuasions as Clinton Rossiter and Michael Harrington. The *National Review*, whose founders and many of whose editors and contributors are Catholics, is to be found in scores of Catholic reading rooms and libraries and is treated there as though it were a Catholic periodical. Its brilliant editor, Mr. William Buckley, is an archetype of many of the newer generation of Catholic rightwingers. He attended an Ivy League university, learned little of whatever it might have had to teach, and came away with a mission to save the upper classes from their own folly in supporting atheism and socialism, a mission whose beneficial effects he soon sought to extend to the nation at large. That the people who go to Yale show little desire for salvation—especially at the hands of an Irish Catholic—and the nation at large little more, only confirms Mr. Buckley's sense of destiny.

Thousands of young Catholics who want to be Ivy without abandoning the attitudes engendered by their culturally deprived backgrounds and their insecure social status eagerly follow him in his ambivalent crusade to protect the

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American upper class from itself. Goldwater bumper stickers abound on the campuses of leading Catholic colleges. Catholic students vie with the Catholic press in publicly acclaiming such right-wing heroes as General Walker and Madame Nhu. Borderline groups in the right-wing political spectrum such as Young Americans for Freedom and the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists draw a disproportionate share of their support, especially outside the South, from Catholic campuses and, apparently, from Catholic students in secular schools. On the other hand, participation of students from Catholic schools in such groups as the Freedom Riders, SNCC, SANE and the Student Peace Union is almost *nil*. The older members of the *National Review* crowd have played a large role in organizing the new Conservative party in New York State, and constitute a hard core of perennial signers of right-wing manifestoes and newspaper advertisements to Save Katanga or defeat the "Treaty of Moscow." Faculty members of Catholic colleges are disproportionately represented among these perennial right-wing witnesses, and recent speculations about Senator Goldwater's possible brain trust have named a similarly large number of Catholic conservatives as potential members.

What of the future? Will this important segment of Catholics continue to lean in the direction of radical right, or will those now drawn to the radical right gradually return to the ways of moderation?

Much of course will depend on the effect an as yet undetermined political future will have on the prospects of the radical right as a whole. Not only the policies and leadership of Lyndon Johnson but what happens in the outside world will be important here. Another China or Cuba, a sharp upturn in Soviet military power relative to that of the United States, these could release waves of popular fear and frustration which might break the bonds of normal politics. Should this happen, Catholics as much as or perhaps more than others might well turn sharply toward the right.

BUT BARRING SUCH REVERSES, several tendencies exist which should diminish the likelihood of increased or even sustained Catholic activity within right-wing extremism. For one thing, the radical right is increasingly showing itself to be closely tied to Protestant Fundamentalism and is certainly dependent upon it for most of its following. Symbolic is the fact that John Birch himself was a Fundamentalist Protestant missionary in China. The numerical strength of the radical right is in the South and Southwest and in other areas where large numbers of white Protestant Americans—long cut off socially from their dominant brethren in the centers of culture and power—have abandoned rural poverty and small town stagnation and migrated to the rapidly growing cities of their regions. These people are now undergoing the same process of assimilation to modern society that Catholic immigrants from Europe underwent in the past, and much of what has been said about Catholics whose economic status was rising but who failed to achieve social and intellectual acceptance by the dominant Establishment can be said of these Fundamentalists as well; also, puritanism has had an influence among them parallel to that which we have suggested it had among Catholics.

How much these groups will be able to shuck their inherited virulent anti-Catholicism, how well Catholics will be able to adjust to them, is difficult to predict. Within these Fundamentalist groups there is still a tendency to anti-Semitism and overt anti-Negro sentiments which is no longer as prevalent among Catholics as it once was—in part because such attitudes are not now especially respectable in middle class American society. The Birch Society, among others, has fought hard to combat these tendencies among its own rank and file, but they do exist and may serve not only to deny the radical right acceptance within the nation as a whole but may well stand in the way of the alliance between Fundamentalist and Catholic diehard conservatives which some political observers have feared to be in the offing. While many newly well-to-do Catholics incline toward the right because of dislike for federal government intervention in the economy, much of the agitation for "States' Rights" on which the radical right feeds is based

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CALIFORNIA

The heartland of the Right Wing in California is in the southern counties, but perhaps its most effective "salesman" is Hugh Fine of San Jose.

Fine is the John Birch Society organizer in the Bay Area and is dedicated to his work. An ardent Catholic, Fine lives with his wife and nine children across the street from the Catholic Church and prep school. His children all attend parochial schools.

He drives about in a panel truck and "sells" the philosophy of the John Birch Society. This is his sales pitch:

"We are at war. We are losing that war. And the reason we are losing is treason."

A public high school graduate and a two-year student at a Jesuit university, Fine was working in a gas station on December 7, 1941. It was Pearl Harbor, he said, that led him to first think that something was "haywire."

"I wasn't a student of international or world affairs," he said, "but I could not conceive that the country with its informed intelligence services could have been surprised to the degree that allegedly Pearl Harbor had surprised us."

When he read *The Roosevelt Myth* by John T. Flynn, he became convinced that Pearl Harbor was the result of "treason"—by President Roosevelt and General George C. Marshall.

And this belief brought him right to the John Birch Society.

— *William Flynn*

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on a Southern desire to maintain segregation. Whatever personal feelings particular Catholics might harbor toward Negroes, even the most rightist among Northern Catholics can hardly be expected to feel a quiver down his spine when "Dixie" is played, and Catholics are bound to feel out of place in a right-wing movement of largely Southern orientation.

At the same time that Protestant Fundamentalists are taking over the leading roles in right-wing extremism once held by Catholics, Catholics today are losing some of their hostility toward American society and the modern world in general—and American society is losing some of its hostility toward them. The life and works of Pope John XXIII and President Kennedy have played complementary roles in producing this effect. President Kennedy's election and tenure of office did much to assure non-Catholics—from Baptist ministers to the readers of the *Nation*—that Catholics in fact did not have horns. At the same time he demonstrated to Catholics that it was possible to attend Harvard and associate with the WASP leadership of the country without losing one's faith, and that Catholics are not necessarily debarred from influence at the higher levels of American life and are indeed first class citizens if they wish to be. The work of Pope John—especially the impetus given liturgical reform and the ecumenical movement—not only made him a figure beloved throughout the world but also marked the end of the Counter Reformation and made Catholics aware of the need for a more open approach to the world as it is.

But not all Catholics. There is still, especially perhaps in the United States, a large group of Catholics who not only view Kennedy as a traitor to the Church, if not an actual crypto-Communist, but also regard Pope John as having been a dangerous if unwitting ally of the Communists. It is interesting to note that those who, from a right-wing perspective, reject the message of John's social encyclicals also tend to reject reform of the liturgy. The *National Review*, for example, followed its famous "Mater Sí Magistra No" editorial with an article by Evelyn Waugh attacking the use of the vernacular in the Mass. The official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, where the dialogue Mass is proscribed, has published rabidly right-wing supplements financed by extremist groups.

One result of Vatican II has been that the so-called liberal wing of the Church—in the United States as elsewhere—has discovered its own strength (even if the outcome of the Council is still far from certain). This could promote developments within the Church of great importance for future relations of Catholics and the radical right. Some powerful members of the American hierarchy have long feared that the American episcopacy acting in concert might set policies and express attitudes less conservative than they would be willing to endorse. The pronouncements of the NCWC, far more liberal than those of most Catholic groups, can be largely suppressed or ignored within particular dioceses. Increased power given to a national conference of American bishops would make such action more difficult, and, in so doing, would make life harder for the radical rightists within American Catholicism.

But, insofar as the attitudes of the majority of the hierarchy and clergy become less right-wing, the danger of right-wing anti-clericalism increases. One already hears it said in right-wing circles that the Church is meddling too much in political, economic, and social matters—a complaint that will rise in intensity if the Catholic Church in America should increasingly adopt positions uncongenial to a Catholic middle class with strong rightist leanings. Right-wing anti-clericalism presently ranges in public expression from "Mater Sí, Magistra No" in midtown Manhattan to the activities of a Leander Perez in rural Louisiana. Paradoxically it has its adherents even within the clergy, many of whom deplore the direction in which the statements of some Catholic authorities on social questions, including statements of the Popes themselves, seem to be tending. They and their lay allies usually express their anti-clericalism by suppressing, ignoring, or soft-pedaling any Catholic discussion of social problems which does not take as its theme an obsessive negative anti-Communism compatible with the mood and teachings of the radical right.

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For them the only role of the Church in society is to provide chaplains for the anti-Communist crusade.

It is unlikely that the relations between the Church and those of its members and leaders who support the radical right will ever develop into anything like the open break which would almost certainly occur if the same amount and kind of support were being given to the radical left. The divergence from Christian social teaching of the doctrines and practices of the radical right is both more subtle and more appealing to many American Catholics than that of the radical left. What is likely is that the radical right within the Church will increasingly become a politico-religious sect unto itself, looking upon its own adherents as the only real Catholics, and seeking to place them in positions of influence within the Catholic community while denying such positions to those it considers to be dupes of the enemy. Their position would be strengthened if those who regard the radical right with the distaste it merits, seeing its influence within the Catholic community, themselves withdraw from many aspects of the life of that community rather than carry on a tedious, enervating and seemingly unnecessary battle. But not all Catholics can or will abandon the Catholic community to the radical right, seeking refuge as individual Catholics in the larger community. Convinced that specifically Catholic institutions and ideas have a vital role to play in modern American society, they will continue to struggle against rightist influence within the Church. The danger is that unless the political religion of right-wing Catholicism is soon exposed, isolated, and drastically reduced in influence we will increasingly be faced with the existence – in spirit if not also in the flesh – of two Catholic communities, each with its own press, its own clerical heroes and villains, its own organizations and attitudes toward individual parishes and schools. Political extremism – a force which threatens to destroy the health and unity of American society – could also destroy the health and unity of the Catholic community within that society.

This would be a great tragedy even on the political level. For it is possible to contend that the Catholic Church has a mission to American democracy – to be a bastion of true conservatism and moderation in what always threatens to become a mass society destroying tradition and individuality. Spanning social classes and radical groups, uniting persons of differing intellectual backgrounds and interests, the Catholic Church could serve as a cementing force in an American society faced with the problems of adjusting to a difficult and dangerous international situation, a crisis in race relations, and growing economic and social problems. To that end, however, the Church must surmount, not reflect, the tendencies toward mistrust and extremism prevalent within the larger society. The death of President Kennedy has served to remind all Americans of the bonds that unite them and the perils of loss of faith in the procedures of the shared community. Since President Kennedy belonged in a special way to American Catholics, hopefully they will be able to find in his death a special source of strength and wisdom.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The manuscripts submitted in both the RAMPARTS Short Story Contest (which closed October 1, 1963) and the RAMPARTS Poetry Contest (which closed January 1, 1964) were found by the contest Judges to be below the minimum contest standards established by the Layman's Press.

It is the decision of the Editors of RAMPARTS to discontinue the contests.

The Editors

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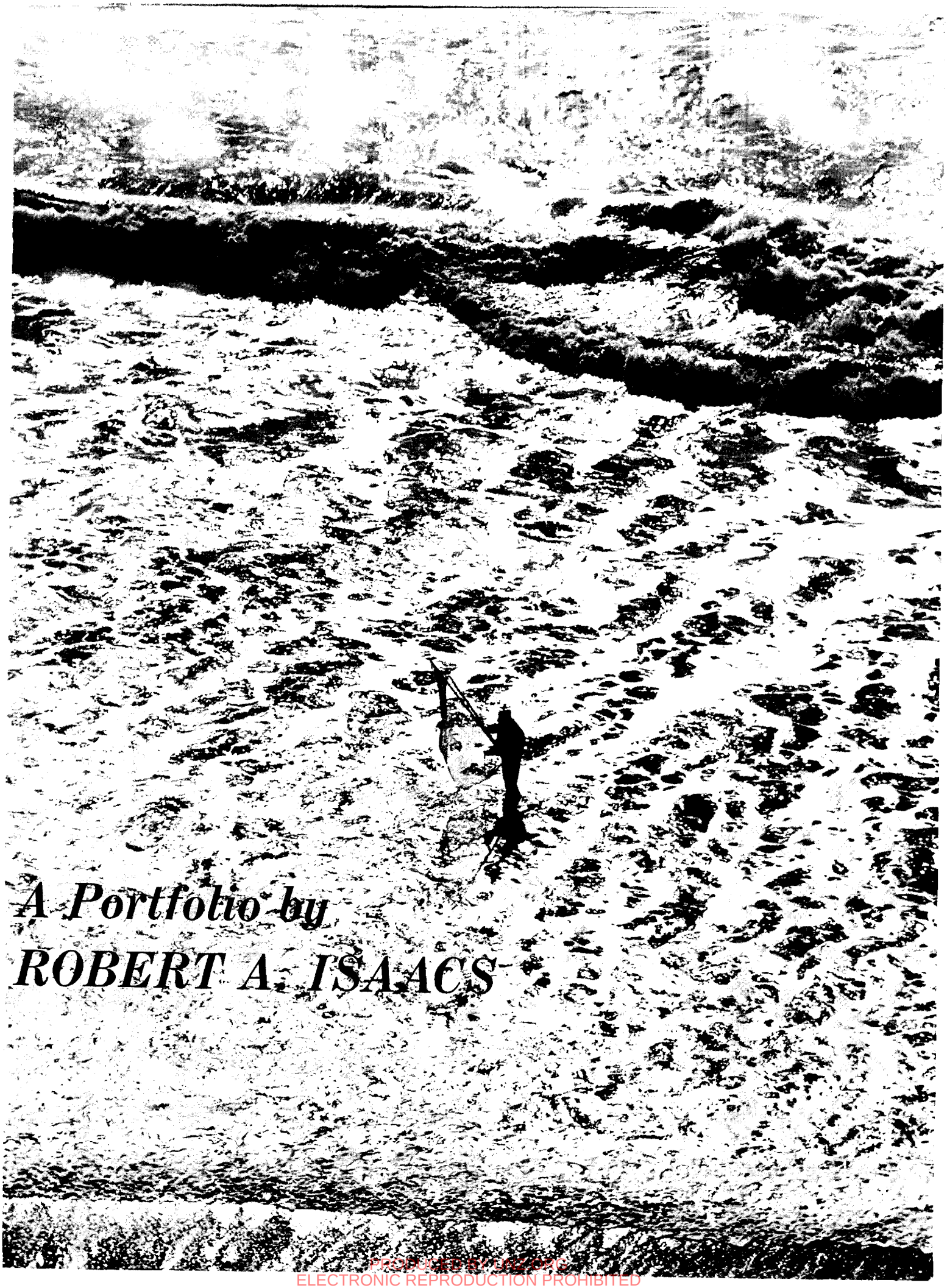

A Portfolio by

ROBERT A. ISAACS

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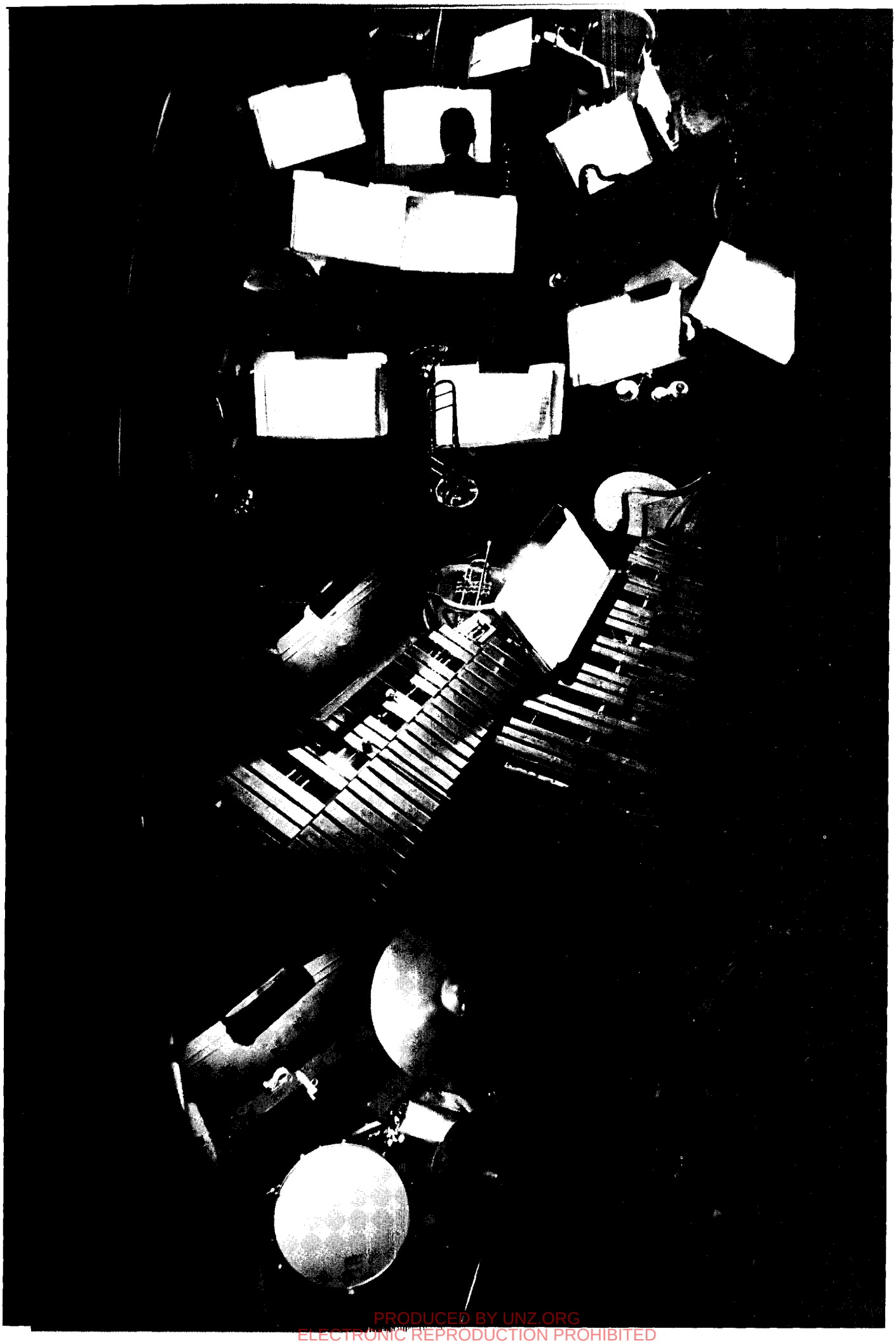

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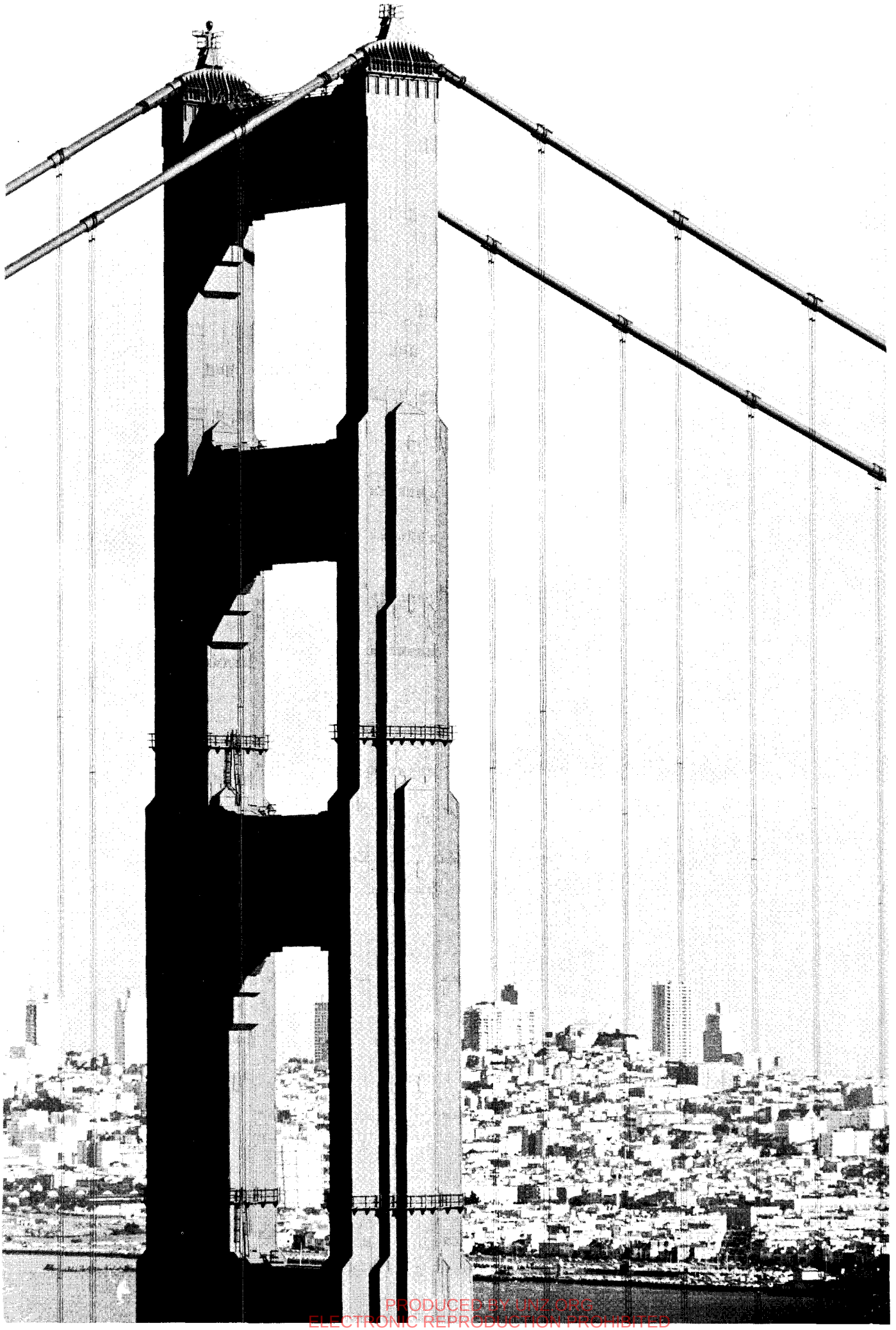

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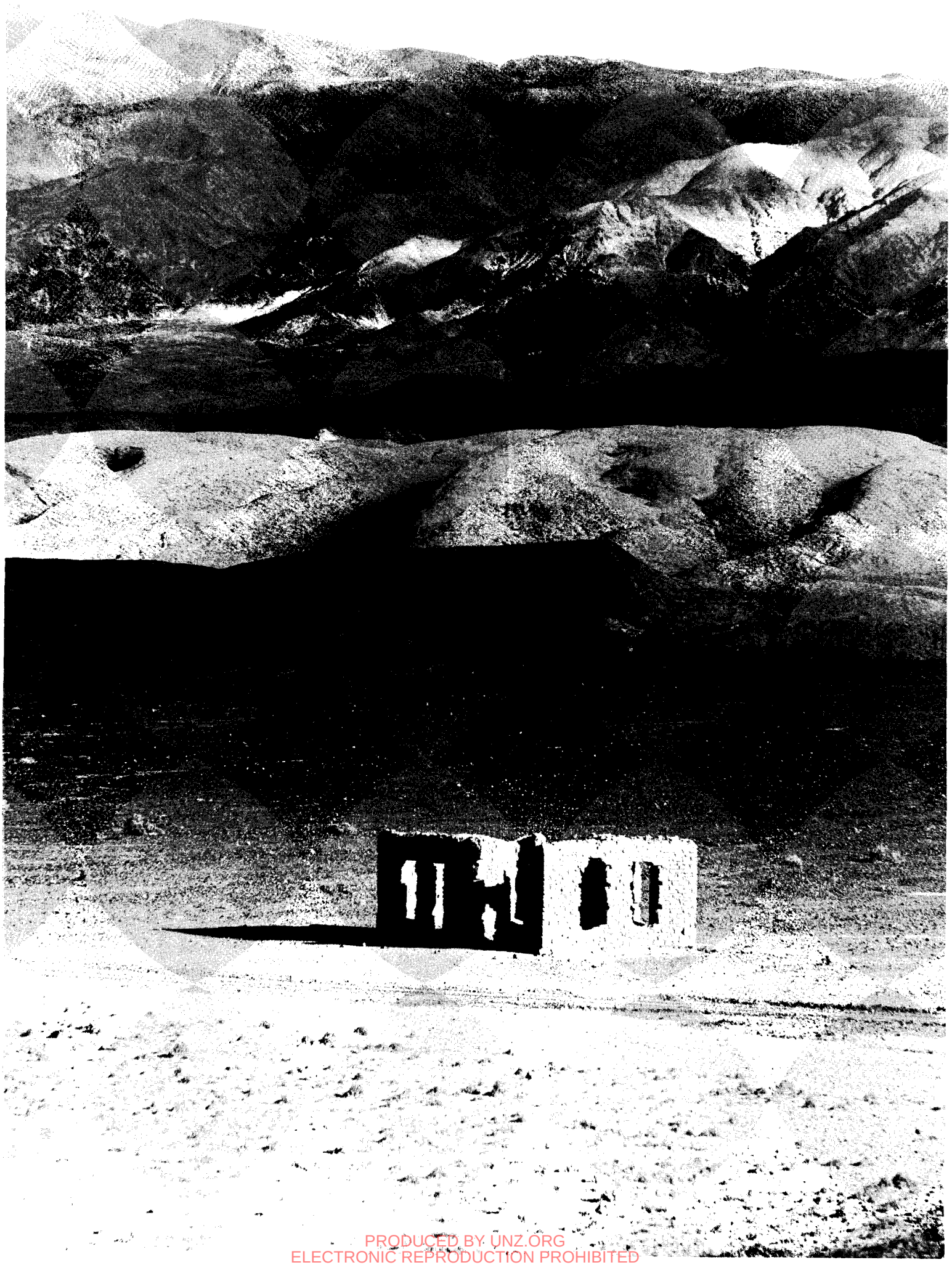

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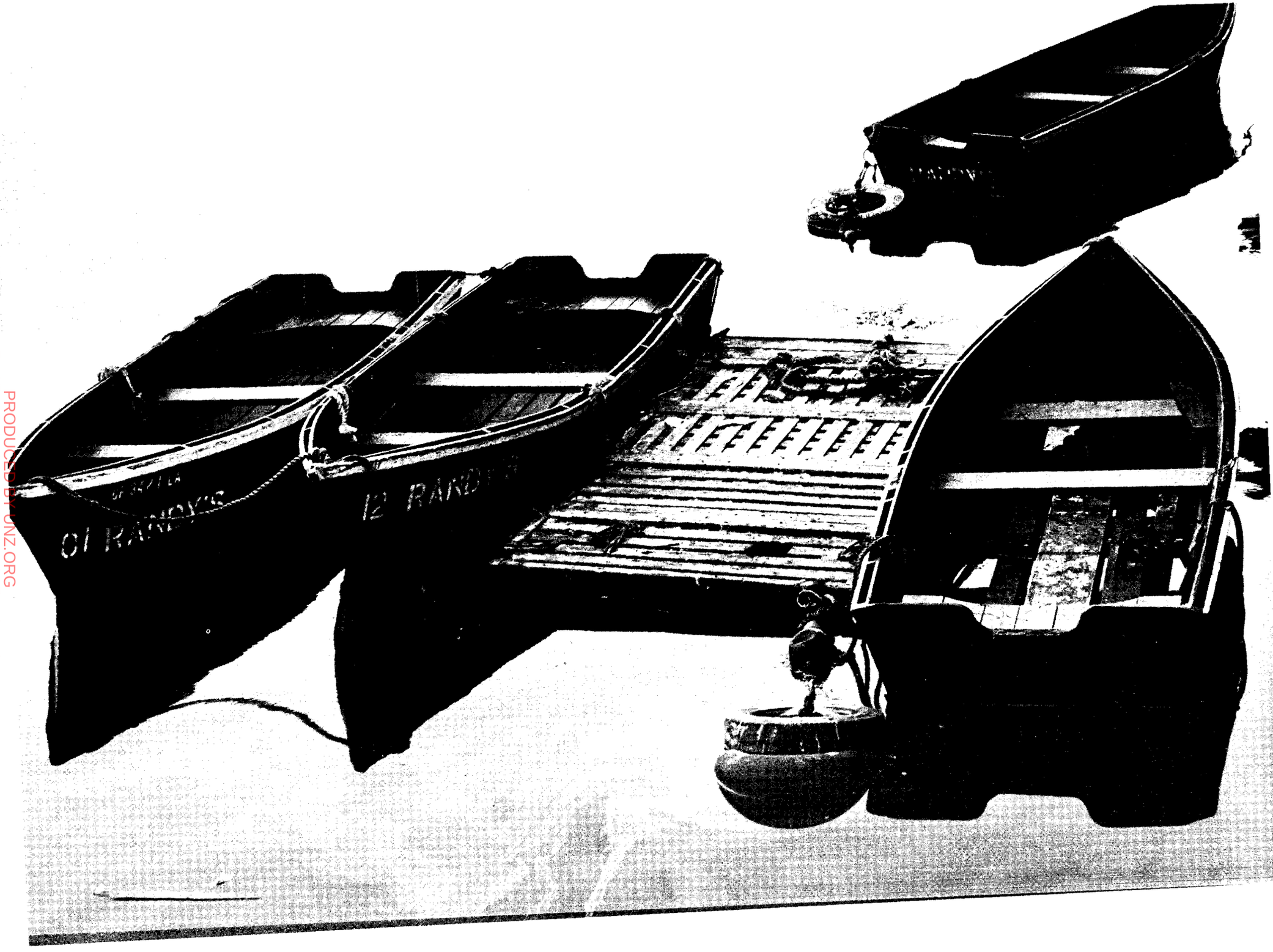

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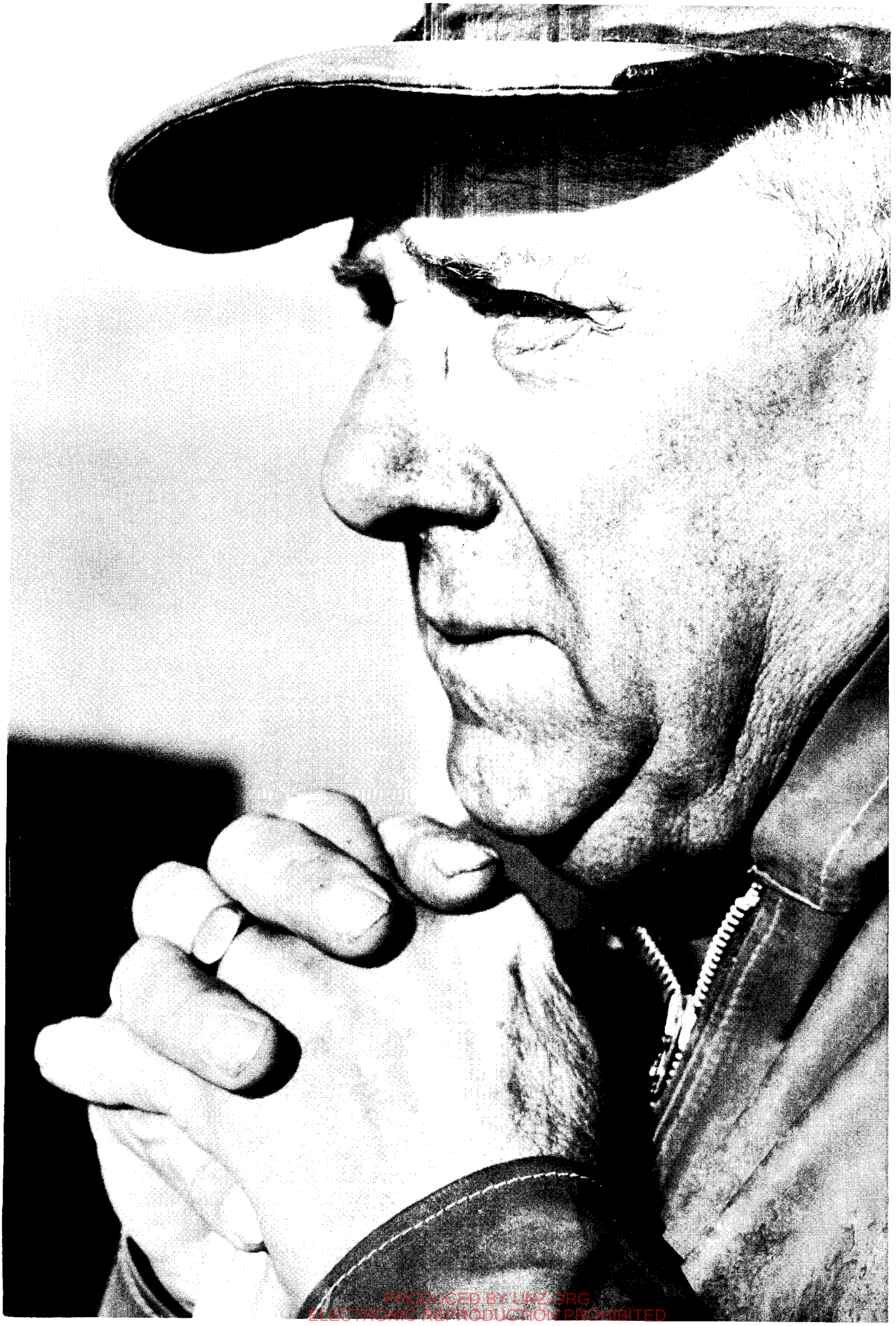

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Judith Stone

Interview With Rolf Hochhuth

FOR A MAN WHO HAS provoked a storm of conscience and controversy in the Christian community and shattered the inviolability of the Vatican, Rolf Hochhuth is surprisingly shy and diffident, but he has the courage to examine the most terrible moral problem of our time: "How does man exercise his responsibility?" The 32-year-old German Protestant and former member of a Hitler youth group was not looking for easy answers or a scapegoat when he wrote his searingly anti-Nazi play *Der Stellvertreter* [*The Representative* in England, *The Deputy* in the United States], accusing Pope Pius XII, Christ's Representative on Earth, of failing to raise his voice, even once, publicly, explicitly, unequivocally, against the murder of six million European Jews.

The question that haunts him, and all guilt-ridden young Germans is: "How could our people have killed six million Jews?"

He talked about the German reaction in an interview during the Christmas holidays while visiting his parents in Eschwege, the small town in which he grew up. Hochhuth is a slender man with a look of pain on his face, the physical residue of a partial paralysis compounded by some inner struggle. A slight imbalance of the eyes compels attention and the level sincerity in them commands respect. His grave and lovely wife Marianne, whose own mother was decapitated by the Nazis, acted as translator.

"If I had killed someone," Hochhuth said slowly, "I can never get rid of it, no matter what I do. So I must live with this feeling of guilt and gradually I get used to it. It's the problem of each individual: how he can live with guilt. Whether he gets indolent or superficial. I wrote this book; that's how I lived with it." He paused for a long time and murmured, "But if you measure it [writing a book] against the murder of only one child, it is, of course, nothing."

The uproar in Berlin when the play opened in February 1963 under the direction of the famous Erwin Piscator has since spread to Switzerland, Paris, England, Denmark, Vienna and the United States where it opened in New York in February, produced by Herman Shumlin. For the play, Hochhuth won the "Young Generation Playwright Award" of the 1963 "Berliner Kunstpreis"; shared the Gerhard Hauptmann Prize of 1962; he has been praised as a social conscience, a mantle he wears awkwardly and reluctantly, and he has been damned variously as a Nazi, a Communist and an anti-Semite.

To those who asked him to refute the charges, Hochhuth replied with quiet dignity, "I will not answer. I want them to judge my play independently of my person. Whoever reads my play and still maintains the opinion that I am an anti-Semite, or Nazi, or Communist, this one cannot be answered."

In all the controversy about the Pope, Hochhuth said, his major point has often been overlooked. Perhaps because the truncated, oversimplified three-hour stage versions have lacked the moving complexity of the eight-hour original drama, just published as *The Deputy* by Grove Press in this country.

"To me," Hochhuth explained, "Pius is a symbol, not only for all leaders, but for all men—Christians, Atheists, Jews. For all men who are passive when their brother is deported to death. Pius was at the top of the hierarchy and, therefore, he had the greatest duty to speak. But every man—the Protestants, the Jews, Churchill, Eden, Cordell Hull, all had the duty to speak."

It is absurd, he said, that people should accuse him of trying to diminish the guilt of the Germans because he has accused the Pope of silence: "The arsonist does not become less guilty because a fireman resigns in front of a great fire."

"I hope that this play will give a lecture for the future," he said, "because I think the terror against the Jews in our time is only one example of the terror which reigns on earth at all times, in all epochs, in every century. In every nation there are feelings that wait for a Hitler to awaken. In other centuries there was the Inquisi-

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tion. Nearly all times have known horrible examples that certain groups of men were persecuted in dreadful ways: The Christians in Rome, the heretics persecuted by the Christians. Therefore, I fear that this will never cease. Today there is race persecution between white and black; the persecution of the Communists by McCarthy and others and the persecution of others by the Communists. There was McCarthy on one hand in America and Ulbricht on the other in East Germany and Kadar in Hungary.

"I believe that this play may be a lesson for the future if only people will accept it. A friend asked me, 'Why do you take such pains to write about the final solution? In 20 years' time no one will talk about it.'

"I have studied enough of history to know that he was probably right; actually the victims have always been forgotten very quickly. But in spite of that, I am convinced—not only in spite of it, but because of it, that the play can teach a lesson which is timeless."

To oppose injustice, Hochhuth said, "one needn't be a moral man. It is enough to do nothing which damages others." (To a critic who asked, "Is this indeed enough?" Hochhuth replied, "It may not be much if you measure saints by it, but for people it is enough.")

How could a young German grow up under the Hitler regime and retain a moral sense?

HOCHHUTH WAS BORN in 1931 in the little town of Eschwege in Northern Hesse, near the river Werra, now just a few miles from the East-West border, a border that torments the playwright. "You must see the border," he urged repeatedly. When finally we did, it was an odd sight: after their heavy noon-day dinners, the West Germans come on Sunday outings, with powerful field glasses, to look at the border. What are they looking for? What do they see?

Hochhuth sees for the Germans a tragic fate, inextricably linked to that of the Jews, and in the border, an almost mystical analogy to the Jewish Diaspora.

Asked if he thought that Germany could ever again be a threat to the world's peace, he replied, "Only in an indirect way. A country of 70,000,000 which is cut into two pieces against nature can never come to peace. The Germans should be forbidden atomic weapons for all time, but they should be given their unity. The occupying powers can stay; they don't disturb us, but the border between the Germans should be removed. One should always think of it and see it. It's idiotic, this border.

"This border in Germany may be the beginning of a Diaspora like that of the Jewish people. I think that German history will become as sad and tragic as the Jewish history. I feel that the tragedy of the Jewish history has not come to an end by the foundation of the state of Israel. This small country with a small population in the midst of the Arab world is menaced so terribly. I fear for it . . . And when one thinks of the anti-Semitism in Russia leading to persecution again . . . The Germans and the Jews seem to have the quality of always getting themselves disliked and persecuted."

Hochhuth has refused to let his play be performed in Eastern Europe or in any country where the Church is suppressed by the State, but he wonders if his decision is correct. "When I read now in a leading Jewish newspaper in West Germany that the Jews are actually persecuted in Russia, I ask myself if it wouldn't be important to publish my play in Russia for evidentally the Church is less suppressed at the moment than Jewry. A Hungarian anti-Communist in Paris who left Hungary during the revolution, wrote that it was great folly not to allow my play to be published in the East. He said the play calls people against all forms of terror and for that reason the people in the Eastern bloc would understand."

But Hochhuth who has had offers from Poland, Prague and Belgrade, said, "I am convinced they would abbreviate it in a radical way and I couldn't do anything about it. I'm afraid the Communists would use it for propaganda against the Church."

He himself had little formal religious training in Eschwege where his father ran a shoe factory which had been founded by Rolf's great grandfather. The elder Hochhuth had been an officer in World War I and an officer for three months

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in the second World War before being retired because of his age. One brother served in the army in Hungary and two cousins died in the war.

In 1941, at the age of ten, like all other boys, Hochhuth became a member of the Deutsches Jungvolk, a Hitler youth organization. When still a boy, he met his future wife, Marianne Heinemann, editor of a recent book of German poetry. Her personal tragedy is nowhere reflected in the serene warmth of her blue eyes, but unspoken pride shines in them when she speaks of her mother. She has achieved a matter-of-fact tone when she tells of the day two Nazis in civilian clothes came to their home in Berlin to take her 35-year-old mother away "for questioning." The 10-year-old Marianne watched as the men found the hidden, forbidden books by authors whose works had lit the unforgettable bonfires of 1933. Marianne's grandmother, a poor peasant girl who had worked and studied to become one of the first women Social Democrats and served on the Frankfort town council until removed by the Nazis, trembled and sank into a chair. Her mother, tense and pale, tried to summon reassuring words for the child. Nine months later, Marianne was told her mother had died of a heart condition, but years later, she learned of her decapitation in prison. Her father, a former teacher, died serving in the Wehrmacht in Romania and 11-year-old Marianne was sent to Eschwege to live with relatives. She and Rolf met in school toward the end of the war.

Hochhuth, trying to recreate the mood of those black, wartime days, said, "To the end of the war, the little boy Rolf wished that Germany would win. My parents did not wish it and they would never have thought it possible that Germany could win after the invasion of Russia, but of course, they could not tell their feelings or they would have been killed. They heard the English and American broadcasts even though there was a death penalty for anyone caught listening. My mother entered a restaurant one day and told someone that the Americans were in Brussels. Since the German radio did not announce it until the following day, it was clear she had heard it on the enemy radio. She was denounced to a Nazi organization, but the leader was an old teacher of hers, a good man, and he told my uncle, who later became burgermeister for the Americans, to warn her not to do it again. That time they tore up the report.

"We feared the Russians," he said, "and because of the bombing of the Allies, we hated the Allies. From a propaganda point of view, it was not a good idea for the Allies to bomb civilian centers. As boys of the Hitler youth, we had to pick up pamphlets and leaflets dropped by the Allies. On these leaflets, it was written, 'We are not fighting the German people but the Nazis.' But we boys mocked those words because we saw dead women and children and we were impressed and hated those who had done it. The Americans who attacked Eschwege tried to find the military targets only and it was only bad luck they bombed the streets near the airport. But the English destroyed Kassel. We saw the town burning from here and my 14-year-old brother had to go there at night to help. The English didn't care where they bombed, but now I understand the English point of view."

Although Eschwege had many Jews living there, by 1941 the last ones were driven out to nearby Kassel and from there to Riga where they worked in the mines and were later killed. Rolf remembers with grief the act of charity extended by his mother to the Jewish wife of their cousin, a well-known doctor in Wiesbaden.

"A Jew married to a non-Jew was considered half-Jewish so they were not deported in 1941, but they had to wear the yellow star. My parents invited her here in 1943 and we boys were ashamed and wondered what people would think. She was very sweet to us and grateful. She stayed for a few weeks although people wondered and talked in a small town. When she returned to Wiesbaden, she had an 'invitation' to go to the Gestapo and she poisoned herself. Her husband was asked to help revive her, but he would not because he had promised to respect her wishes about her own fate."

Meanwhile, the townspeople heard from soldiers returning from Russia of rumors that the SS had engaged in mass shootings, but the ru-

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mors were all very quiet, very hush-hush.

"We thought it could not be true," Hochhuth said. "It was so ugly and brutal. But in a war, people's feelings become insensitive. The Jews had disappeared from our lives but we knew from books and school lessons that Jews were described as *untermenschen* and that all other people were second class. We also knew that the Russian prisoners of war in Germany and the German prisoners of war in Russia were treated badly and died of starvation, but this didn't affect one; each one had his own problems; we trembled for members of our own families."

After the Americans occupied Eschwege, they nominated as mayor Rolf's uncle, a well-known businessman who had not been a Nazi. He appointed the 13-year-old Rolf to be his messenger between Town Hall and the military government.

"The first week of the occupation was not very agreeable for the occupied. My parents and others had to leave their homes, but we were relieved because the war was over. My brother who had been taken prisoner of war by the Americans was released. And then the cruel things of the concentration camps became known. The photographs were shown in the papers and it shamed and sickened us. We didn't dare to believe . . ."

In the turmoil, he said, "The American army would have won the hearts of the German youth at once if they had treated the German soldiers better. Of course, they made great speeches that the Germans must not for the next 1000 years have guns, but you must take into consideration that the boys liked soldiers and ships and suddenly they heard it would be forbidden for the next 1000 years. On the one hand, they understood how guilty they were and the disaster we had brought to Europe, but these were the feelings that struggled inside us. And we were terribly frightened of the Russians. We heard about the most dreadful crimes the Red Army had committed in the Eastern Zone and this was no more Nazi propaganda, but facts.

"I say all this knowing that we Germans have started with all these cruelties and that 'who sows the wind will reap the storm.' "

The young people today, he said, consume great quantities of non-fiction pocket books about the Third Reich and they ask, "How could it have been possible?"

"The people who were adults at that time and who silently feel guilty do not want to get near these problems. They have made great sacrifices through the war to Hitler. It is not very rare to find German families who have lost two sons and there is almost no family who has not lost one. I do not want to weigh the victims of the battlefields against the gassed people. I am not trying to make an accounting. Auschwitz was the top in inhumanity. But I will try to make you understand a little more. The old people are tired of torture. They want to be left in peace from politics. And also of the politics of today. One can be glad they come out for elections. But for the young people as truly as I am sitting here, there is no anti-Semitism. They don't know Jews. (One man said, "Jews are like Martians to them.") Towards the Jewish people they feel guilty. 'How could our people have killed six million of them?' "

When the war ended and the realities of daily politics became too complex and confusing to young Rolf, the introspective youth kept to his books and began writing poetry. Then he discovered Thomas Mann and *Buddenbrooks*. It was a great revelation.

"The world of Buddenbrooks was the world of my ancestors. The firm my mother came from was also founded in 1797 and the last of the family was no more a businessman, but a sensitive artist. This touched me; the decay of a family fascinated me because I saw it in all the families I knew."

While reading the book, he learned that Mann had voluntarily left Germany because of his opposition to Hitler. "Mann has influenced me most," Hochhuth said. "The early Thomas Mann, his attitude towards life, his humanity, his engagement in politics. I have learned from Thomas Mann that the poet always must be active in politics. That he is also responsible. *The Deputy is* politics."

At the age of 17, Hochhuth left school to become a bookseller because he believed that he

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could come closer to literature and writing than by taking German lessons and studying natural science. After a few years as a bookseller in Marburg, Kassel and Munich, he fell ill for a year with an undiagnosed sickness which left one side of his face partially paralyzed. When he recovered he still could not work and he decided to attend the University of Heidelberg and the University of Munich to study history and philosophy.

In 1955, he became a reader and editor for the largest book club in the world, Im Bertelsmann Lesering, and he edited a collected edition of the famous 19-century anti-clerical satirist and caricaturist Wilhelm Busch. The book included among hundreds of caricatures of people and animals, some drawing of Jews, a fact which led to an attack on Hochhuth as an anti-Semite.

"Busch was not an anti-Semite," Hochhuth said. "One of his stories is about an innocent Jew who is hanged for a crime committed by Christians. But Busch was anti-clerical and I have discovered that in certain historical periods, one must be anti-clerical in order to defend oneself."

However, in an edition of Busch for children —his Max and Moritz characters became a model for the Katzenjammer Kids—Hochhuth omitted the pictures of Jews "so that German children would not mock the Jews."

AT THE SAME TIME, he wrote an unpublished novel in the form of letters called *Occupation*, a picture of the last weeks of the Nazi regime and the first month of the occupation. But he was writing more history than fiction and in studying the documents of the Nuremberg trials, he discovered the strange and improbable figure of Kurt Gerstein, the SS officer who plays a major role in *The Deputy*.

Gerstein had been active as an Evangelical Church youth leader. He wrote and distributed anti-Nazi pamphlets of the Confessional Church until his arrest in 1936. Upon his release, he determined to enlist in the SS and led an almost suicidal double-life there to determine the truth behind all the rumors of genocide. Gerstein finally made his way into the SS "Institute of Hygiene" and was responsible for taking delivery of consignments of Zyklon B, the lethal agent used in the death camps. In August 1942, he set about trying to sabotage the destruction process and from that time on was "driven without respite" to make the facts known to Protestant and Catholic leaders, including an attempt to reach the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin. After making a full report to the Allies in 1945, Gerstein's trail disappeared in a Paris prison and his name has been placed by the Paris Jewish community on their memorial tablet for the victims of Fascism.

Fascinated by the figure of Gerstein, Hochhuth felt that he was a Christian "of a type so modern that to understand him completely one needs to read Kierkegaard. What interested me was that Gerstein was a Protestant in the most literal translation of the word. I believe that the Christian spirit as he expresses it, is the real spirit, the form of Christian spirit for our time."

He became so excited reading the documents on Gerstein that the drama inescapably began to form in his mind, although he had never thought of writing drama before.

"Then in the autumn of 1958, Pius died," Hochhuth said. "In Germany, the newspapers and radio declared that a holy man had died. The Germans loved Pius whose three closest advisors were German and they called him the German Pope."

But Hochhuth, stirred by Hitler's murder of almost 2500 Catholic priests, felt that "the holy men were those people who had died in concentration camps and not a man who died in his bed at a high age. Those Catholic priests whom Hitler killed are the true martyrs of the Catholic Church in our time, not the man who personally never tried to protest.

"I saw that this was the tragedy, the tragedy that the Vatican out of reasons of state did not support those members of their own church who sacrificed themselves."

He dedicated his play to the memory of two of them. One was Father Maximilian Kolbe, Internee No. 16670, a Polish Franciscan priest who died in 1941 in a starvation cell at Auschwitz after asking to take the place of a prisoner who was going to be among ten men punished to death by starvation in retaliation for the escape

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of one prisoner. He died too slowly for the SS and they finally gave him an injection to hasten his end. The other was Provost Bernhard Lichtenberg of the Cathedral in Berlin who prayed publicly for the Jews, was arrested and who asked to be allowed to share the fate of the Jews in the East. But he was taken to Dachau and died on the way there in 1943.

Hochhuth's fictitious figure of Father Riccardo Fontana, S.J., who confronts the Pope with the fact of his official silence, is based on the deeds and aims of Provost Lichtenberg who was concerned with the Pope's reaction to his attempt to share the fate of the Jews. In the play, Fontana, disappointed with the Pope's response, pins a yellow star on his cassock and goes with the Roman Jews to Auschwitz.

"I did not discover the fact of the Pope's silence," Hochhuth said. "In 1944, Albert Camus had posed the question: 'How was it possible that Pius kept silence?' François Mauriac asked the same question, as did the Catholic philosopher Friedrich Heer in Austria."

Leaving Germany, Hochhuth went to Paris and London to study all the relevant documents, the ones published and the ones lying unread in archives. Later he spent three months in Rome, living near St. Peter's, studying the atmosphere, talking to Swiss guards, Romans and Jews who had been hidden in Italian monasteries. He posed a series of questions to one Bishop whose name he will not reveal. After avoiding Hochhuth for weeks, the Bishop finally agreed to see him, confirming the belief of the author in his thesis.

Since the publication of the play a year ago and two books dealing with the controversy, there has been no real answer from the Vatican, Hochhuth said.

"If the Vatican had in its archives documents to throw doubt, even only to throw doubt, on my play, they would have found them and published them," he believes.

Shortly before his election to the Papacy, Cardinal Montini wrote a letter commenting on newspaper reports of Hochhuth's play (cut nearly in half for the theater) to the *Tablet*, the leading Catholic periodical in England. In it, he did not deny the fact of the Pope's silence, but defended the character of Pius and told of his concern for all the victims and fear of bringing on even greater tragedies.

In Basle, Switzerland, where the Hochhuths now live with their three-year-old son, Hochhuth said, "I was visited by a prominent Jesuit father. We talked one whole Sunday, but believe me, we hardly spoke about the Pope. We were mainly concerned about Act 5 'Auschwitz or the Question Asked of God.'"

"The padre told me that another Jesuit, very old, had said in a circle of Church people, that the fact that Hochhuth had attacked Pius was not so important and should not lead the discussion away from the fact that I had said inexcusable things about God.

"Pius is a historical figure, one of 260 Popes and his attitude is not enough to characterize the institution of Pope-dom, either in its good or in its bad sense. But the question for God is timeless, as the atrocities are timeless," Hochhuth said.

He quoted the German poet Trakl: "Silently over the heap of skulls, God's golden eyes open."

"Now for our contemporary sensibilities," Hochhuth commented, "this might have been said somewhat too beautifully, but whether God looks on the heap of skulls or if one says with (Georg Christophe) Lichtenberg (an 18th century physicist and author) 'no invention has been easier to people than the invention of heaven.' This question for God is more essential than the silence of death of the so-called confessional peace which my play has been accused of endangering. That is unimportant to me. Luther once said, 'There must be upheaval in Christendom.' The Christians live much too comfortably today. The Churches have never before been even remotely fed with tax money as they are today, and on top of this one should leave them in peace? Why?"

JUDITH STONE, *formerly associated with* Look *magazine, is now the editor of the daily drama, music, and art section of the* San Francisco Chronicle.

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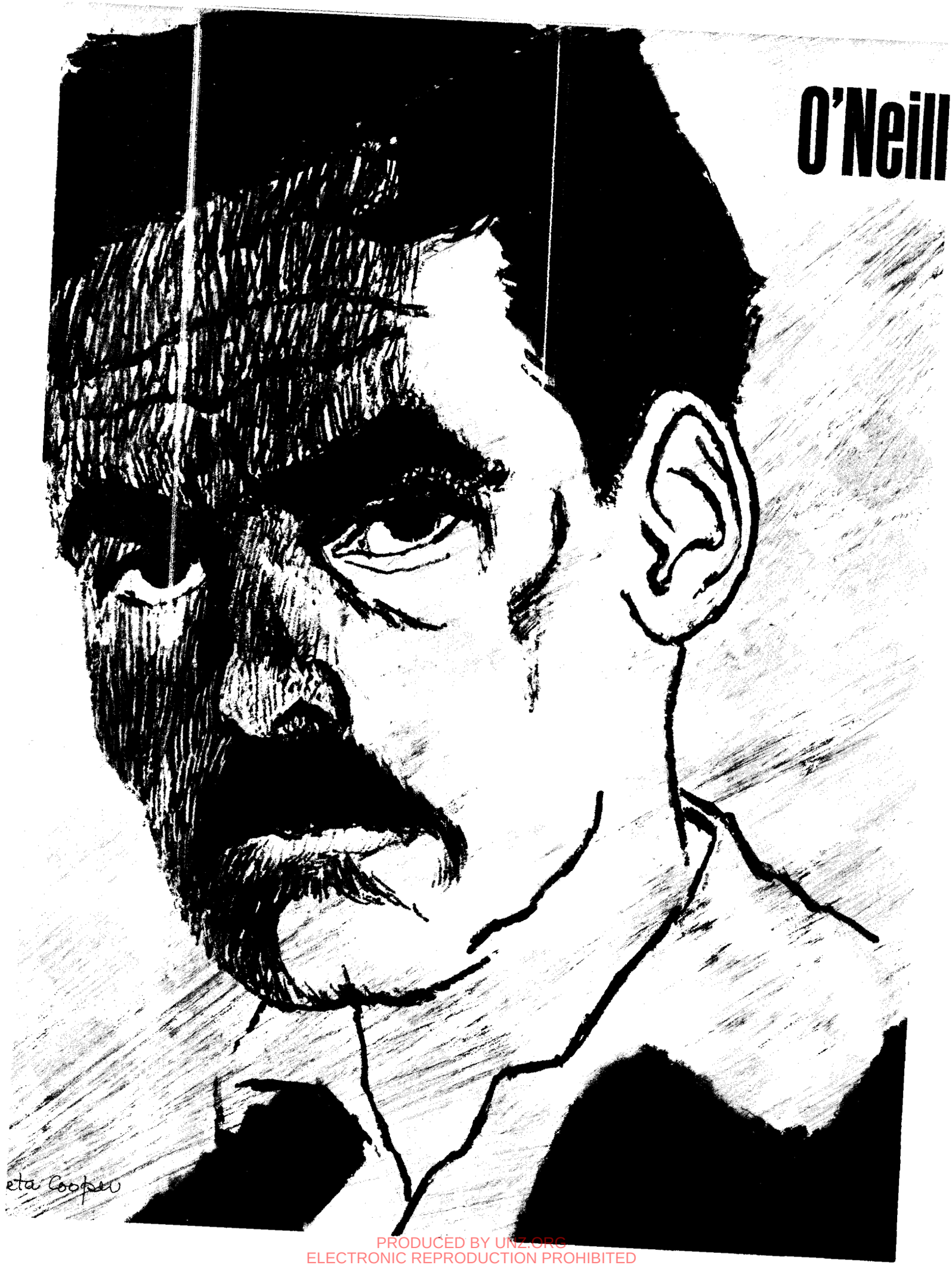

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John Henry Raleigh

Eugene O'Neill

THE MOST POTENT WRITER of the American twentieth century as well as its most fascinating literary personality and imagination will prove to be—to go out on a long but sturdy limb—Eugene O'Neill. As a person, O'Neill was in his own lifetime a "Presence." Croswell Bowen, a reporter, who wrote the first full-length biography, *Curse of the Misbegotten* (1959), writes of his first sight of O'Neill in 1946 at the offices of the Theatre Guild, which was at that time rehearsing *The Iceman Cometh*, in words of awe:

> *Suddenly, a hush descended over the entire group. The tall, spare figure of Eugene O'Neill, his handsome face cast slightly downward, strode through the hallway into the rehearsal room. I had seen his picture many times, and now I felt that I was looking at a familiar face—the mustache and the wry, sardonic smile crossing his lean, lantern-jawed, ascetic features. And I felt that his glowing eyes took in the entire hallway and everyone in it.*

With all observers, it was always the eyes, described variously as "glowing," "penetrating," "fathomless" that, like those of the Ancient Mariner, fixated the observer. They were the eyes of a man set apart, one who had traveled to Hell and had come back bearing in his arms the mixed treasures of his plays, all of them, from the dross of something like *Days Without End* to the gold of *The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and the other late plays. O'Neill once told Manuel Komroff, one of his editors, that it was the reading of Strindberg's *The Dance of Death* and Dostoevski's *The Idiot*, during the time of his incarceration at a tuberculosis sanitarium, that were the catalysts which set him off as a writer. And like those mighty, passionate, troubled, fecund spirits, the Swede and the Russian, O'Neill was a kind of Holy Sinner who out of his personal agony spun an immense creative world which, like theirs, was both awesomely tragic and full of great beauty. All this showed in his face. The actress Mary Welch who was interviewed by O'Neill for the role of Josie Hogan (she won the role) in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, said the O'Neill legend was no "legend": "He *was* 'gaunt,' 'intense,' 'tragic.'" So it follows that writing about him is no mere biographical exercise; it is a nod from destiny, a calling. "I remember," writes Bowen, "that I wanted to become his disciple; I wanted to defend him against the world. His sad, intense eyes seemed to be piercing right into me. They haunted me for days after." The authors of the latest O'Neill biography, Barbara and Arthur Gelb, told the present writer that they, in effect, gave up six years of their lives (twelve years let us say, all told) to the research and writing of their mammoth *O'Neill* (1962) whose stark and portentous title strikes just the proper note. Doris Alexander has published only the first installment, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (1962), of her decade or so (still continuing) of research. And the most massive treatment of all, with the research going back a number of years and still continuing, is being compiled by Lou Scheaffer, once a reporter on the *Brooklyn Eagle*, whose present occupation, or dedication, in life is to write a biography of O'Neill.

There is too the personal memoir, *Part of a Long Story* (1959) by Agnes Bolton, O'Neill's second wife. And all this forest of oaks stems back to a little acorn, Barrett Clark's one-hundred page *Eugene O'Neill* (1926) which, in its turn, has been periodically revised and republished.

Bowen, the Gelbs, and Scheaffer are all journalists, and this fact is not without its significance and importance, whatever its liabilities. The liabilities of these journalistic endeavors is that they are inclined to be weak or minimal in criticizing the plays and that they tend to be undocumented and to lack a thesis or theses. But they are all fascinating simply because their subject was so, and they command respect because of the labor, dedication and intelligence that went into them. And the fact that the authors are journalists is of signal importance. In the first

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place a good newspaper man knows what constitutes "news," i.e., what will interest people. To take an extreme contrast, it is difficult to imagine —in fact it did not happen—a fleet of journalists descending on Lübeck to begin their research on the boyhood of Thomas Mann shortly after his death. For Thomas Mann was never penniless and "on the beach" in Buenos Aires, nor did he try to commit suicide at "Jimmy the Priest's," a New York saloon, nor did he have a father who was a colorful actor, a mother who was a morphine addict, and a brother who drank himself to death (so far as I know). I do not know the full count of incidence of suicide in the Mann geneological tree, but I am certain it cannot match, numerically anyway, that of the O'Neill's. If the mark of Mann's work was intellectual distinction, that of O'Neill's was forceful simplicity; thus when both authors came to write of life in a tuberculosis sanitarium, Mann constructed in *The Magic Mountain* a vast intellectual edifice, a veritable dialectic of Western civilization, and available, so to speak, only to an educated person, O'Neill wrote *The Straw* (1918-19), an early, and not very good, play about the suffering, mostly emotional, of a young man and a young woman: a child could understand it. Furthermore, when we connect life and work, we find that Thomas Mann's personal tragedies, and I assume that he had more than I am aware of, tended, with the exception of *Dr. Faustus*, to disappear, for his reading public at least, behind that impeccable demeanor or to have been absorbed into that ceaseless, wide-ranging self-conscious dialectic that was his mind. But O'Neill's tragedies were his work in the most literal and direct sense. Thus his greatest play, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, is also his most directly autobiographical work. For O'Neill was a unique combination of a writer who had had an extraordinarily colorful life that was ringed by tragedies, and who as a writer was, comparatively speaking, very direct, elemental, and simple, and who finally put the color and tragedy of his life into his best work.

If reporters are news-hounds, they are also practiced in the art of the interview; and the "research" of Bowen, the Gelbs and, presumably, Scheaffer (and even to a certain extent Alexander, who is a scholar and deals more with documents) consists mostly of conversations with people who knew O'Neill and his family. The list of personal acknowledgments that prefaces the Gelbs' *O'Neill* is enormous, by far dwarfing the acknowledgments for the use of documents. No other writer in history has been so "researched" by interviews with surviving friends and acquaintances as has O'Neill. It is as if John Aubrey had been ten men each equipped with a tape-recorder and a typewriter, or, to put it another way, it is as if when Melville died in 1891 that instead of there being only the briefest editorial obituary in the *New York Times*, a covey of newspaper reporters (and Arthur Gelb is in fact a drama critic for the *Times*) began to run down all his acquaintances to collect about him a vast store of biographical information and gossip. And to the charge that such a method merely sanctions the collecting of gossip, which in part, but only in part, it does, the answer is that nothing is more revealing about a man than the kind of gossip that circulates about him. A fact is an uncontestable fact, but a store of gossip constitutes a fact in itself. The only complaint we have against Aubrey now is that he was much too brief. Future scholars will have no such complaint against O'Neill's various "Aubreys."

I

If we move the discussion to a more profound realm, we find still that O'Neill was simply a singularly arresting personality. The point that Mann makes through Peeperkorn in *The Magic Mountain* is just this, that in the last analysis human character is simultaneously the most mysterious and the most potent of human forces, which is why mankind, anti-anthropomorphism to the contrary, has always tended to make his "God" a man. O'Neill, taken simply as a character, rises like an austere ghost over his contemporaries, most of whom adopted some sort of disguise. O'Neill had no "mask": he just suffered, and he was therefore all of a piece, so to speak, the cruelest and the kindest of men, a vessel of tormented integrity. Even when he was fake, he was an "honest" fake, if such a disjunction may

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be allowed. When he put together pot-boilers like *Where the Cross Is Made* or *Anna Christie*, he was the first to admit it. When in all sincerity he committed a considerable psychological and artistic blunder, as with the ending of *Days Without End*, he could eventually bring himself to admit that too. And when he wrote to Kenneth Macgowan in 1924, ". . . my only message to the world is that it can go f—— itself," he *really* meant it. Even other writers, whom he avoided, by and large, like the plague, knew he was "real." It was reported of Dreiser, who was usually arrogant at such affairs, that when he met O'Neill at a party (somehow O'Neill had been high-pressured into attending), he acted like the proverbial small boy at the feet of the master, asking questions about O'Neill's technique, which O'Neill answered politely. Fitzgerald once met him and was reported to have been "enchanted" by the occasion.

What O'Neill retained all his life was a capacity, a full capacity, for suffering. This is a rare, if difficult, gift. Most bright and sensitive people either force themselves to become fat, dumb, and happy, or take to drink or dope, or to sojourning in sanitariums or on psychiatrists' couches, or become Zen Buddhists, or Catholics, or Marxists, or invent a mask, like Hemingway, which finally destroys the real self, but O'Neill remained freshly "woundable," right down to the end, although, it should be added, that he gave as good as he received. In many respects literary genius is precisely this capacity for remaining in a perpetual maelstrom of powerful and conflicting emotions, a sort of adolescence in perpetuity, freshly suffering, every day, day after day. Tolstoy is a prime example of the type. When he set off from home at eighty-two, he was, emotionally speaking, no different from the wild young officer of the Caucausus days. Dickens was another instance of the type, as was Joyce.

The last suffering act of O'Neill's life, as reconstructed by the Gelbs, is worthy of one of his own plays. Of course, Carlotta O'Neill, his third wife, is still very much alive and very much the keeper of the great man's papers and custodian of his reputation. So perhaps the real truth will only be revealed in the future. Nevertheless, the Gelbs' reconstruction is harrowing enough.

Everything about O'Neill was a contradiction and at no time more so than in his last years, or for that matter the whole last part of his artistic career. On the one hand, he was a kind of Man in the Iron Mask, the prisoner of Mrs. O'Neill, who designed their various homes, outlined their way of life, shielded him from all outside contact, and, according to some observers, made an end to old friendships. At the same time, and as his previous life demonstrated, this isolation is just what he wanted and needed, with someone strong, purposeful and dedicated to preside over the household. Also it was under this regimen, or regime, that he wrote his mature plays, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Hughie*, and *A Touch of the Poet*. His very greatest play, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, is dedicated to her on their twelfth wedding anniversary; surely no wife or mistress of a writer has ever been paid a greater tribute than this dedication, meant, "as a tribute to your love . . . that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play . . ."

But it was in the nature of the O'Neills to feel, and be, trapped. Just as his actor father was entrapped by that old melodrama *The Count of Monte Cristo*—the lucrative leading role which he could not resign—O'Neill felt entrapped by Carlotta. They had hardly begun their life together when, during a visit to Shanghai, he started drinking, had a violent quarrel with her—he hit her, he said—lapsed into alcoholism, while she packed her bags and left. A penitent and shaky O'Neill was finally forgiven and reaccepted by Carlotta. There followed over the years a series of spacious homes, in France, in Georgia, in California, where utter seclusion, and sobriety, were the rule. Every home was "ideal"; yet each one was finally deserted.

When finally they returned to New York in 1945, and moved into a hotel, O'Neill's health improved and he became for a while the gregarious soul that his father had been and that he himself was in great part. In the words of the Gelbs:

> *He resumed his friendship with a number of people he had not seen in years, made new*

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friends, went out to bicycle races, ball games, race tracks, prizefights, and Fifty-second Street jazz places, and granted interviews and entertained visitors. He bought a television set and went to movies... He also sat through a fellow playwright's dress rehearsal, sipped champagne at a party, flirted with young actresses, and even made a speech at a semi-formal banquet.

But Mrs. O'Neill did not like this existence, and O'Neill's own precarious health suffered. The rest of the story is muted enough in the telling, at this date, but as painful as anything O'Neill ever wrote: separations between the two; hospitalization (at one time, unbeknownst to one another, they were in the same hospital in New York and being treated by the same doctor); a final, smaller, rather bleak house on the Atlantic near Boston: more and more isolated; O'Neill's tremor so bad that no work (he had to write by hand) was possible; his artistic reputation on the wane;[1] his financial position shaky; his son, Eugene O'Neill Jr., a suicide; his other son, Shane, a human wreck; his grandson, Eugene O'Neill III, son of Shane, dead, an infant, of neglect; permanently estranged from his daughter Oona because of her marriage to Charlie Chaplin; Mrs. O'Neill, her own health precarious and suffering severe pain from arthritis, more and more a twenty-four hour per day nurse; both living on pain-killers and sedatives (O'Neill joined the Euthanasia Society); O'Neill merely existing, a mind without a body, with the knowledge that he would never be able to complete his projected cycle of American history plays and the knowledge that his disease, while it would never touch his brain and dim his consciousness, would progressively rob him of *all* motor control.

To say that both of them were the opposite of self-effacing and stoical would be an understatement, and the ensuing and inevitable explosion was, once more, worthy of an O'Neill play. On the night of February 5, 1951, O'Neill, who could barely walk, made his short trip to Astapovo; he stumbled out into the cold—nobody ever found out where he intended to go—and fell in the snow, breaking his leg. As he lay in the snow, Mrs. O'Neill was inside the house wrestling with her own horrors, some variety of "bromide intoxication." There follows another separation, hospitalization for both; an army of doctors, lawyers, friends all giving contradictory statements about the condition of each person and of each person's attitude toward the other—but with the unquestionable fact that O'Neill signed a paper for committing his wife as an "insane person"; and that she, on her part, sued for divorce. Then follows a vast conspiratorial affair: old friends readmitted to the "Presence" and trying to assume Mrs. O'Neill's role; O'Neill evidently enjoying the whole thing and allowing them to hope, yet at the same time engaged in secret negotiations with his wife for a reunion. The last scene occurs in a Boston hotel room where the ill and practically immobile man and his far from robust wife lived a few months, wrangling intermittently, she a constant attendant on a physical wreck. Here occurred the destruction of what he had written of the cycle plays (only *A Touch of the Poet* and the "makings" of *More Stately Mansions* survived). On November 24, 1953, his last affliction, pneumonia, set in, and there occurred his last articulate gasp of anger at the fatality that he thought ruled all of human life and to which his plays are a prolonged testimony—"Born in a hotel room—and God damn it—died in a hotel room!" On November 27, a Friday afternoon, he died, another unquiet O'Neill finally gone to the quiet of the grave.

If O'Neill in the life was as tragic as any of his great plays, he came by all of it naturally. The O'Neill family was like the house of Atreus, each generation hounded by an implacable familial curse. The roll-call of doom, for four generations, is awesome.

The most shadowy figure, and the one one would most like to know about, is the paternal progenitor, Edward O'Neill, grandfather to Eugene. A mystic, an unsuccessful farmer, Edward O'Neill immigrated to the United States in 1856, with his wife and six children, of whom James O'Neill, the father of the playwright, was the fourth. Professing to hear some atavistic, ancestral call from his Celtic forebears, Edward

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O'Neill abandoned his family in America and returned to Ireland where, shortly afterward, he died. (In *Long Day's Journey Into Night* it is suggested that he committed suicide.) This combination of mysticism, abandonment, deathwardness strikes the notes that were to be sounded again and again, with variations, for the next three generations. By some biological mutation they largely bypassed James O'Neill to reappear in his sons and his sons' sons, and, as a kind of by-product, in their women. On and on it goes: desertions, alcoholism, dope addiction (Ella O'Neill and Shane O'Neill, Eugene's son by Agnes Bolton); attempted suicide (Eugene) or slow suicide (James Jr. by alcohol) or abrupt suicide (Eugene Jr., son of O'Neill's first wife). It all ends in a terrible pathos, the death by neglect of the infant son of Shane O'Neill, named, appropriately enough, Eugene O'Neill III. In the amount of suffering he was spared, this was the luckiest Eugene O'Neill of all. In some kind of almost uncanny way the family malaise reached out beyond blood lines to in-laws. For example, Eugene Jr. was brought up by a foster father and had a step-brother named George Pitt-Smith, who committed suicide. Similarly, Cathy, Shane's wife, came into a small inheritance by virtue of the fact that her mother had been murdered.

Even the more solid and less complex James O'Neill was touched by the familial malaise, and in him too was the urge to take flight from this vale of tears. In him, of course, these instincts were recessive and for most of his life were pushed aside by a gregarious nature; great personal charm; an enormously popular and lucrative success in *The Count of Monte Cristo;* pride in his accomplishments (he had come from nowhere); a bottle of whisky a day (he always carried it well); a handsome, regal presence; a deep, rich voice; a beautiful wife whom he loved and cherished (narcotics or no); an Irish-peasant hunger for land and a concomitant fear of the poor house; and an almost irresistible impulse for the "ham" by which he could wrap up almost any experience, no matter how dreary, in a thick swath of Irish blarney. Of what must have been his painful childhood, he said, "—smiling Kilkenney . . . where I was born one opal-tinted day." But he always regretted that he had not become the great Shakespearean actor that he could have become and that he was on his way to becoming before *Monte Cristo* captured him, and on his death-bed he is reported to have gasped out to Eugene O'Neill: "Eugene—I'm going to a better sort of life—here—all froth—no good—rottenness." And quite early in his acting career he had an astonishing, and ludicrous, opportunity to act out the familial other-worldliness. In 1879 in San Francisco, where he was very popular, he was offered the role of Jesus Christ in Salmi Morse's *The Passion.* The press and some Protestant ministers were up in arms about the prospect (the Catholic Church, at least officially, kept its peace), and the play evidently was dreadful. David Belasco planned the staging in characteristic grandiose fashion—one hundred nursing mothers to appear in the tableau, "The Massacre of the Innocents." Amidst all this sham the one sincere acolyte appears to have been James O'Neill himself, just recently married and the father of a first son. He gave up drinking and tobacco, and presided over solemn rehearsals after which he retired to his dressing-room for solitary contemplation. The bawdry and raciness that have always been the concomitant of life back-stage were interdicted, and everyone was admonished by precept or example to emulate the meek and gentle Christ of the New Testament. Belasco took to carrying a Bible and talked of entering a monastery. San Francisco's Irish turned out in force for the opening night to see James O'Neill, a Belasco-created halo about his head, be crowned with thorns, at which point some members of the audience fainted. After the performance, according to the Gelbs, Jews were assaulted in the streets of San Francisco by the aroused patrons of the drama. After a short run O'Neill and the company were arrested, and O'Neill was finally fined fifty dollars. But all his life James O'Neill refused to see anything sacrilegious or sordidly commercial or silly in the venture. For him it was not play-acting.

No son is ever quite apparent without some outline of his father. James O'Neill, it becomes quite clear from these biographers, was not equivalent to the James Tyrone of *Long Day's*

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Journey Into Night although there are resemblances between the two. But the real James O'Neill was both more attractive and more complex, complex enough to suggest some of the tangles of the extraordinarily complex character of his more famous son who told him that some day he would be known as "the father of Eugene O'Neill."

Having been at the center of this biological maelstrom, Eugene came to feel that not character but genetic inheritance is fate. Of all great modern writers he, along with Proust, believes the least in the power of environment, the most in the force of heredity. The characters in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* could well be living on the moon for all the power that the America of 1912 exercises over them; it is all a war of nervous systems, all of them inherited. The projected cycle of plays about American history was to be a biological drama as well, showing the results of the intermixture of Irish and "Yankee" blood. Genetic combinations fascinated him generally, as they did Shaw; thus the complex character of Sara Melody in *A Touch of the Poet* is first sketched physiologically: a body both peasant-like and aristocratic forecasts both her character and her fate. She is to join the New England aristocracy by marriage to Simon Harcourt the class to which, as her face suggests, she belongs. But to attain this felicity, she must have recourse to a peasant-like ruse (she seduces him), an act that her thick ankles and stubby fingers predict. Similarly, wild biological mutations engaged O'Neill's imagination. Josie Hogan, the Irish giantess of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, whose father is rather short, is a biological freak, but her character and fate, once more are determined by her physical inheritance.

II

O'Neill's own character and fate, however, were anything but predetermined, and his mind, imagination, and interests were remarkable for their range and polarities and for their unexpected twists and turns.

Like many highly imaginative men of the post-eighteenth century era he was a skeptic and rationalist who at the same time wanted to, and did, believe in ghosts. There resulted the characteristic amalgam of a ferocious rationalistic and skeptical nihilism, on the one hand, and a whole array of irrational superstitions, on the other. In the latter part of the Gelbs' biography he is quoted at least twice as saying that the invention of the atomic bomb was a great thing, for it surely showed that man now intended to destroy himself, "the only truly wise decision he has ever made!" Yet he wanted to believe that spirits were also at work in all this nothingness and meaninglessness of which the world was com-

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posed. When he went to the horse races, he made his bets by a system of numerology. Like Joyce he was terrified of thunderstorms, and was possessed of all kinds of superstitions and beliefs. Fog, which he loved, made him uneasy. At least once he sat at a séance and was properly impressed and shaken by a series of raps on the table, a "communication" from the "spirit" of a drowned sailor. When living on an estate in Ridgefield, Connecticut, he professed to hear footsteps going around the house at night, and during the day, when he was writing, he would feel someone looking over his shoulder. He accordingly took to sleeping in the barn with a bottle of whiskey as a companion. He once had his palm read by the wife of Benjamin De Casseres, the critic, and was startled by what he regarded as the prescience of her prophecies about his life. Convinced that she was a true prophetess, he continued to keep in touch with her during one of the most trying periods of his life, when he was in Europe with Carlotta but before his divorce from Agnes Bolton, and took great relief in her soothing assurances that peace would soon be forthcoming (as it was).

This side of him was constantly stretching out to, but never quite reaching, some kind of faith, especially the Catholicism from which he was an apostate. But the skeptic was always there to snatch him back. His long flirtation with Catholicism reached its climax in what he and others have regarded as one of his worst—if not the worst—plays, *Days Without End*, where at the end the protagonist John Loving, having killed his skeptical half—an actual alter ego that now lies a corpse, on the stage—stands before a huge representation of the crucifixion in a church, with a sympathetic priest in the background, and exclaims in all the fervor of his renewed faith and in the last lines of the play:

Life laughs with God's love again! Life laughs with love!

This play, and this ending, O'Neill later admitted was "phony." He had in fact agonized over the ending, changed his mind several times about it, conferred with Jesuit priests about it; and was never quite sure what he should do. His skeptical side dictated another ending which at one time he planned to use, namely, that Loving rather than regaining his faith should commit suicide before the altar (although, it should be added, a real skeptic, especially an Irish skeptic, would have shot the priest first).

In his earlier days the veil was rent by some mystic moments, especially at sea and especially on a voyage on a sailing ship when in the early morning hours, like Melville before him, he would climb aloft and alone contemplate the coming of day. In the Gelbs' reconstruction of this experience:

Wherever he looked the sea met the sky in a vast circle, of which he and the ship were the center. No experience in his later life ever equalled the exultation of those hours aloft.

The worst moments in his plays occur precisely when he tries to put these feelings into the words or feelings of one of his characters: Lazarus's "laugh" or Ponce de Leon's "visions." He only came close when he put an admittedly banal description of it in the mouth of Edmund in *Long Day's Journey* who quickly adds, after his brief excursion into the mystical, an apology for his own inexpressiveness and inarticulateness.

The converse of these "white stone" moments in O'Neill's complicated consciousness was an abiding interest in anything bizarre, dark, tortuous, or tortured. In Shanghai he was fascinated by the Police Museum wherein were displayed the old police tortures, the more bizarre of which especially took his fancy. Anything that indicated repression or suppression or pain or any kind of torturousness aroused his interest. While living in Nantucket, he was struck by the historical memory—he even contemplated a play on the subject—that in the early days after the Revolution, when Nantucket was a rich trading center, many of the vessels were engaged in trade with China; many a ship captain brought home to his wife exotic gifts, embroidered silks, carved ivory, teakwood furniture, and opium. Accordingly, sometimes when their husbands were away, these women could be seen, all dressed in finery, staggering through the streets drunk on opium. It was precisely this kind of inversion of a norm, in this case that of the stoical New England wife patiently pacing the captain's walk as

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she waited for the return of her lord and master, to which O'Neill unerringly gravitated. What appealed to him in the Bible, and what he once contemplated a full-scale adaptation of, was, of course, that great, awesome, apocalyptical, indecipherable Revelation of St. John the Divine. Another "prophetic," and darkly ambiguous, piece of literature that appealed to him was Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, and he actually did an adaptation of it although his contributions consist of little more than a few stage directions and some dialogue.

When he once contemplated a visit to Egypt, at that time (1930) still, in the Western mind, the House of the Dead, he felt that he would be at home:

> *Egypt has always called me. I've got a greater hunch for their feeling about life and death than for that of any other culture—and I think aspects of the country will confirm this. I expect in a queer way to feel spiritually and psychologically at home there.*

For Spain, in its way another House of the Dead, he felt the same affinity. In visiting there he wrote to a friend that Spain was "very interesting to an old Catholic." And like a good Irishman, he felt some kind of supra-rational affinity for Jews. This complex of Irish-Spaniard-Jew, with Egypt in the background, is of course precisely the same racial complex that lies behind *Ulysses*. And like Bloom, O'Neill felt the *drang nach Osten*, all the way—to China (which, when he finally got there, proved only another place for him to be nervous and unhappy). But, like most Irish writers, he remained incurably atavistic.

This longing for the past and the lost, the soul's incurable loneliness, manifested itself in the physical present by a love of lonely activities, usually connected with the sea: swimming, boating, or simply staring out at the ocean. It is difficult to say what the sea meant to him because it meant everything: adventure, isolation, mystic rapture, death, purity, renewal, immolation, union, and so on. The sailor's life—his own period as a sailor remained his own proudest and most cherished memory—signified a completely unconventional existence, free of social hypocrisy and the entanglements of women, punctuated by orgies, sexual and alcoholic. One of O'Neill's key words and concepts was "rhythm," and it was the sailor's life with its basic alternation between land and sea, with the antithetical activities on each, that was for him the basic rhythm of life itself. His first, full-length, produced play, *Beyond the Horizon*, is based on the longing for the sea. When his sailing days were over, long distance swimming remained as a kind of mystic retreat. His obsession with death merged here into the most exquisite idea of immolation—to strike out from the shore and swim into oblivion. In his younger days he told several young women that his idea of a tolerable arrangement for a marriage was a barge with the wife at one end and he at the other.

At the same time he was and remained a Tonio Kröger, always half in love with the bourgeois existence that he so deeply detested, and he could have said of himself what Tonio does say of himself in his letter to Lisabeth at the end of Mann's story

> *I am looking into a world unborn and formless, that needs to be ordered and shaped; I see a whirl of shadows of human figures who beckon to me to weave spells to redeem them: tragic and laughable figures and some that are both together—and to these I am drawn. But my deepest and secretest love belongs to the blonde and blue-eyed, the fair and living, the happy, lovely, and commonplace.*
>
> *Do not chide this love, Lisbeth; it is good and fruitful. There is longing in it, and a gentle envy; a touch of contempt and no little innocent bliss.*

Thus O'Neill's idyl, *Ah, Wilderness!*, is an apotheosis of turn-of-the-century, middle-class, Protestant America, the fair and living, the happy, lovely, and commonplace. This amusing and convincing play he described as a "Comedy of Recollection" about "the real America," that is, "little big-town" America at the turn of the century:

> *My purpose was to write a play true to the spirit of the American large small-town at the turn of the century. Its quality depended upon atmosphere, sentiment, an exact evocation of*

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the mood of a dead past. To me, the America which was (and is) the real America found its unique expression in such middle-class families as the Millers, among whom so many of my generation passed from adolescence to manhood.

The warm and charming family life of the Millers in *Ah, Wilderness!* was based upon the life of a similar family that the O'Neills knew and admired in New London, and the young life of Richard Miller is the young life that O'Neill would have liked to have had, so he said. And underneath O'Neill's rebellion against and cynicism about the "Yanks" lay a fervid idealization of Protestant middle-class American life. The O'Neill family was in a peculiar social position in New London, Connecticut, neither "in" nor "out." Ella O'Neill had some social pretentions and was considered snobbish by many of her own Irish relations. Thus the family, as a family, had no Irish friends, although James O'Neill had his drinking companions. But, as Irish, they were considered beneath the social notice of the more wealthy "Anglos." Thrown back on themselves, the O'Neills evolved that passionate and anarchistic love-hate relationship that is so excruciatingly detailed in *Long Day's Journey*, with its accompanying contempt—much of it genuine, to be sure—for the "Anglos." But O'Neill longed for what he hated, particularly a beautiful young lady named Maibelle Scott whom he knew in New London before and after his sojourn in the sanitarium. She finally married someone else, but not before they had had a brief, heart-felt interlude. He treated her with the greatest respect, wanted to marry her, and years later confessed that there were only two women in his life whom he had really respected: one was his mother, the other Maibelle. The fact that he was seldom at ease with "nice" girls like Maibelle, and only expansive with "tarts" or "whores" (an important distinction that O'Neill makes in *The Iceman Cometh*) only underlines that longing that he felt for the Maibelles and the world they represented.

He both loved and hated almost everything, including America. So while he thought America was the greatest failure of all nations because it had the most advantages to start with and had done so little with them, he would also leap to the defense once the question of possible European superiority was raised. In France he spoke of:

. . . the evident fierce animosity to Americans as artists. They [Europeans] are forced to see our industrialism swamping them and forcing them to bad imitation on every hand and it poisons them. They are bound they'll die at the post rather than acknowledge an American has anything to show them in any line of culture. It's amusing—and disgusting!—this clinging to their lost superiority out of the past.

And to the critic Ward Morehouse he confided:

No nonsense such as renouncing America. There's such a thing as being sensibly patriotic. But living away from America has been a good way to get to know it—to see things that you couldn't see before.

What he really loved was American indigenous culture, mainly low-brow but verging up into the middle-class domain of musical comedies, detective stories, and sentimental songs, and down into authentic low-life: sleazy saloons, ladies of the evening, gangsters (in his early days he was an especial favorite of the Hudson Dusters, a gang of New York hoodlums), prize fighters, sailors, "down-and-outers," dock workers, stokers, Wobblies, anarchists, and the like. If anything he preferred the low-brow to the middle-brow. Thus when Harold Minsky, the burlesque impressario, asked O'Neill, through an emissary, to write something for him, "something to do with art," with the promise that anything O'Neill gave him, he would produce, O'Neill was touched: "That's the most flattering offer I've had." But when an emissary of Jean Harlow sent him a cable requesting him to write a screen-play for her and telling him to cable back, collect, confining his answer to twenty words, he promptly replied: "*No No No No No No No No No No No No No No No No No No No O'Neill.*" At the center of his love affair with American popular culture were sports and music. While he could not

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stand being in a crowd at the theatre, he minded crowds not at all at six-day bicycle races, prize fights, or baseball games. He admired, and once met, Jack Dempsey, and prized, beyond anything that a professional dramatic critic could say of him, Gene Tunney's statement to the effect that he "secretly cherished the thought that Eugene O'Neill is a greater writer even than Shakespeare."

His taste for popular music ran the gamut from nineteenth century sentimental ditties, to twentieth century "pop" tunes, to jazz, of which he finally amassed an extensive record collection. In his New London days when he was writing doggerel verse for a local newspaper, he composed a ballad about his "vulgarian" tastes in music:

The long-haired high-brows call me "vulgarian"
When the "Great Big Beautiful Doll" I croon
For I'm strong for the music that's real American
And the joy of my heart is a rag time tune.

Years later, for their home at Sea Island, Georgia, Mrs. O'Neill, with much effort, ran down an ancient player piano complete with all the rolls of the old songs he loved. Better, this battered old instrument, nicknamed "Rosie," had once provided background music for a New Orleans bagnio and thus came replete with paintings of naked women. All witnesses agree that he "adored" that piano and spent hours pouring nickles into it, tapping his foot to the rhythm of, say, "Alexander's Rag-Time Band" or even breaking into song.

These songs appealed to him equally for their sentiment and their rhythm. The sentiment is woven into *Ah, Wilderness!:* "Waltz Me Around Again, Willie"; "Waiting at the Church"; "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," and others. O'Neill also appreciated the fact that many of these tunes were full of *double entendre*, or could easily lend themselves to such reversals. Thus in the barroom scene in *Ah, Wilderness!* Belle, the prostitute, sings to Richard a *sub rosa* version of a line from "Bedelia," a sentimental song of the day. Belle's version goes: "Bedelia, I'd like to feel yer." *Ah, Wilderness!* represents the fullest use O'Neill made of American popular songs, but he also used them for background effect in *The Hairy Ape, The Great God Brown, Mourning Becomes Electra, All God's Chillun Got Wings, The Iceman Cometh*, and other plays. Many of these songs were also, especially in the rag-time arrangements, inexpressibly "tinny" and thus pathetic because of the gap between the innocuous or vacuous content of the words and the rather sadly dismal, faintly discordant music.[2]

It follows that O'Neill was most contemptuous of "artiness," especially that connected with the theatre. His pet grievance was actors and he could hardly bear to see a play, which he claimed he could produce best in his own imagination, without noting all kinds of "acting tricks" being displayed. For if he was like Hemingway in his love of athletes and sports, he was like Yeats and T. S. Eliot in his detestation of modern "subjectivity." His use of masks and frequent pleas for the development of mimes arose from a desire to obliterate "personality" as an essential ingredient of stage performance. Accordingly, he was most careful about the published versions of his plays because he knew that it is by the printed texts that these plays would live. At the same time he was fascinated by the artistic possibilities that technical inventions, such as "talkies" and later television, offered, and the possibilities they offered for escaping from "personality":

> *As to the objection to the "talkies" that they do away with the charm of the living, breathing actor, that leaves me completely cold. "The play's the thing," and I think in time plays will get across for what their authors intended much better in this medium than in the old.*

He even envisaged a cross-breeding of the two mediums, combining an acted play with a filmed background. While he never actually attempted this fusion, the idea remained with him for years. He thought that *Hughie* should not be given a conventional production but that it should have for its presentation a new technique utilizing a filmed background and sound track. But, "It would require tremendous imagination. Let whoever does it figure it out. I won't be around to see it."

But if he loved low-life, he also longed for high-life. He once told Maxwell Bodenheim that the only hope for human society was to combine

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the toughness of the underworld and the creativity of the upper world in an "aristocracy of swift brawn and equally quick mind." One of the many confusions dealt out to Con Melody in *A Touch of the Poet* is that he does not know whether he is an aristocrat or a peasant. So O'Neill, only at home at Jimmy the Priest's, longed to be a *grand seigneur*. The Irish myth that all Irishmen are descended from kings ("We are all Irish, all kings' sons," says Mr. Deasy to Stephen in *Ulysses*), James O'Neill's regal bearing, Ella's snootiness, his own handsome, finely drawn good looks, his sense of his own natural superiority, all conspired to further the suppressed sense of regality.

When the Theatre Guild was casting about for an actor—both Spencer Tracy and Lawrence Olivier were suggested—to play Con Melody, O'Neill remarked:

> "*What that needs is an actor like Maurice Barrymore or my old man, . . . One of those big-chested, chiseled-mug, romantic old boys who could walk onto a stage with all the aplomb and regal splendor with which they walked into the old Hoffman House bar, drunk or sober. Most actors in these times lack an air. If a playwright doesn't work up entrances fifteen minutes long for them and have all the other characters describe them in advance as something pretty elegant, noble, chivalrous and handsome, the audiences won't be able to accept them for much more than third assistant barkeeps, if that.*"

Even Jamie O'Neill, a wastrel and a "Broadway bum," good-looking, sardonic, a supreme waster of his substance, was still a "gentleman." During rehearsals for *A Moon for the Misbegotten* O'Neill expressed concern over the way in which actor James Dunn was playing the role of Jamie, for he said that Jamie was a "gentleman" and that Dunn did not comprehend that part of the role and was thus misrepresenting the true Jamie.

One of the many attractions of Carlotta Monterey was that she played, rather successfully, the role of the "grand" lady. Under her ministrations he gave in to his inherent dandyism, spending hours being fitted for suits. Miss Monterey presented him with a mink-lined black overcoat, about which he became boyishly enamoured. He called a friend one day and asked him, "very solemnly," to drop in at his hotel on the way home from work:

> "*When I got there, I knocked at his door and he called to me to come in. He was standing in the middle of the living room looking portentous, and didn't say hello, just asked if I'd wait a minute, and then he vanished into the bedroom. He appeared a minute later wearing an overcoat with a mink collar, looked quizzically at me for a moment, and then opened the coat, to show me the fur lining.*"
>
> "*How do you like it?*" *O'Neill asked.*
>
> "*Very nice,*" *said* [*the friend*], *who happened to detest fur-trimmed coats for men.*

Several other friends were treated to this same portentous display. After the marriage to Carlotta he was to dwell in solitary splendor in elaborate houses chosen and redecorated and reappointed by his wife. The first was, appropriately, a French château, named "Le Plessis." As the Gelbs describe the remainder of his life:

> *Between them Carlotta and O'Neill had begun creating a legend about the handsome, romantic, remote, château-dwelling O'Neill, secluded in work and in love. For the next twenty-six years of O'Neill's life Carlotta devoted herself to protecting her husband's seclusion and perpetuating the legend.*

At Le Plessis guests dressed for dinner.

III

If O'Neill was special for the quality, intensity, longevity, and honesty of his suffering and the complexity of his character, he was as special, as an American writer, in many other ways as well. First he was a considerable popular success, especially in his earlier days: Broadway productions and moving picture adaptations and a large income. As a result of this, he lived during most of his life like, in Mrs. O'Neill's word, a "duke": a mansion, servants, dressing formally for dinner, and so on.

In the second place O'Neill was more genuinely a lone wolf than other American writers who have been notoriously "lonely" but at the

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same time eager, some times pathetically so, for some kind of attention or notice. Even Faulkner, another lone wolf, spent some of his last years as a visiting celebrity in American universities. But it is impossible to imagine O'Neill, even without the debilitating illness of his last years, ever doing this. Even if he had wanted to, his nervous system would not have allowed any kind of public performance, which made him break out in fits of trembling and sweating. Once he was inveigled to come to a fund-raising dinner for the Provincetown Players. Unexpectedly, he was called on to speak; he rose scowling and embarrassed and said, "The Provincetown—town did its best work when it didn't have a quarter." Then, muttering to himself in a tone that only those who were sitting at his table could hear: "Sit down, you son of a bitch, sit down." And he sat down. Like almost no one else in American literature he lived for and to himself and his agonizing daimon. It was because of this almost total seclusion that he became a legend in his own lifetime.

More importantly, he reversed the usual pattern of the American writer, as a man and as a writer. Instead of going to pot after his success and fame, like Hemingway or Lewis or Fitzgerald, he got it all over with beforehand in his younger days: rootless wandering; alcoholism; brushes with death (his early T.B. and an attempted suicide in 1912). He continued to be a heavy periodic drinker after his initial success, but by 1926 he had become a teetotaler and remained so, with a few lapses, for the rest of his life; and at this time his greatest work lay ahead of him.

Similarly, as a writer—and only Henry James in America is comparable—he continued to grow and grow, in every way, from range of subject to formal skill. *Hughie*, for example, is virtually faultless. Its handling of American vernacular of the twenties is superb, making Runyan look even more arch and coy and Lardner, surprisingly, contrived and formal. One has to go back to *Huckleberry Finn* to find an equivalent in ease and power. His creative potency becomes all the more impressive when one realizes that from at least the 1930's he was suffering from a rare, progressive and incurable disease, by which the cerebrum remained untouched while the cerebellum was subjected to a slow, degenerative process. The disease first attacked his hands, subject to an ever-increasing tremor. The last great plays were written in a continual struggle with the tremor; some days he could not write at all. Worse, he was wed to the pencil and could not dictate. His thoughts flowed from his brain through his arm to the paper. Some measure of his agony and the intensity of the struggle can be gauged from examining the O'Neill manu-

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scripts at Yale or Princeton. His one defense against the tremor was to write in a smaller and ever-smaller hand. Some of the later work and letters, although remarkably clear, are in a fantastically minute hand, like the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin. But the spacious imagination grew apace. Besides *The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Hughie*, and *A Touch of the Poet*—for these alone he would be a great world playwright—he left notebooks filled with ideas and outlines: a projected play about Aeschylus; one to be called *Gag's End;* one about Don Juan of Austria and Philip II; a *Negro Play;* one about Robespierre; one about China, an autobiographical monster, to be entitled *Sea-Mother's Son* and a futuristic anti-totalitarian fantasy, to be called *The Last Conquest*. Then there was the great cycle of plays about American history, nine projected plays covering the fortunes of an American-Irish family from 1775 down to the present century, of which only *A Touch of the Poet*, and, partially, *More Stately Mansions*, are extant. The scenarios of the rest he destroyed, for fear that someone else would try to finish them after his death. *Then* there was the projected series of one-act plays to be collectively entitled *By Way of Obit*, of which only *Hughie* survives. (But by it alone he takes his place with Chekhov.) Yeats once invoked the name of Milton for a comparison to O'Neill, and the invocation is not an idle one. For a powerful imagination wrestling with an enormous subject matter, despite a crippling physical handicap, only Joyce or Milton or Beethoven are comparable.

O'Neill's "place" in American literature is not yet clear, although it is becoming more clear almost daily. One of the troubles is that he has had two careers and while critics were busily casting aside the first career, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Strange Interlude*, and so on, the playwright himself was at work on his second career, the power of which we are just becoming aware of. Nor, as will be apparent finally, is the first career by any means negligible, as *The Emperor Jones*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings* and others would indicate.[3]

The second difficulty is that he is usually seen, or written about, in the context of the American drama, a kind of Alp looming up between Percy McKaye and Arthur Miller. But where he really belongs is in the great dark tradition of American literature, the tradition of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and the others. It is a fact of history that the drama usually lags behind the other mediums, and O'Neill may be regarded as a belated explosion in the American drama of the powerful, dark, and torturous concerns of the American nineteenth century. Almost everything is there in O'Neill: from Henry Adams' dynamo *(Dynamo)* to Hawthorne's New England family, ancestrally cursed and inhabiting a gloomy home from whose walls glare down the grim visages of the Puritan ancestors *(Mourning Becomes Electra)* to Melville's obsessed sea captains, "melting pot" crews, and mystique of the sea (the early O'Neill sea plays).

All kinds of unexpected "coincidences" begin to turn up when O'Neill is looked at as if he were a nineteenth century American writer. For example, like Henry James, O'Neill fancied the ambiguous ending, and at the conclusion of *Dynamo* or *The Straw*, as with *Portrait of a Lady* or *The Ambassadors*, the reader is left with a question mark as to the final meaning of the document. As in James's late novels, there is in O'Neill's late plays an element of the grotesque and the monstrous. Surely it is not coincidental that in the very last work of each writer—*The Ivory Tower* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*—there should appear, looming up, the figure of a gigantic woman: James's Rosanna Gaw and O'Neill's Josie Hogan. The resemblance (I'll leave the explanation to "readers in depth") is uncanny, in that both of these giantesses are motherless, have diminutive fathers, over whom they tower, and that the emphasis in both cases is on the graceful physical prowess of each young woman. Characteristically, the power of Josie Hogan is demonstrated, and, once more characteristically, Rosanna Gaw's is only implied: "her powerful exposed arm raised to her broad shoulder." Or again Poe's concerns keep popping up in O'Neill: the tubercular heroine *(The Straw);* incest *(Mourning Becomes Electra);* dope addiction *(Long Day's Journey Into Night);* the great,

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grotesque iceberg rearing up in the fog-shrouded sea *(Fog)*.

But it is Melville to whom O'Neill has the most affinities. In "The Hunted," the second part of *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Orin Mannon tells his mother of having been loaned a copy of *Typee* while in the army, which he "read . . . and reread . . . until finally those Islands came to mean everything that wasn't war, everything that was peace and warmth and security." Adam Brant, the hated lover of Orin's mother, is also a devotee of the South Seas. Actually, in *Mourning Becomes Electra* the South Seas stand for uninhibited sexuality, set off against the Puritanism of New England. This contrast, which so fascinated Melville, also fascinated O'Neill and is a major motivating force in *Diff'rent*, an early play, and in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Similarly, the powerful, obsessed whaling captain with a younger child-bride, appears in O'Neill's *Ile*, as he does again, this time obsessed with gold, in *Where the Cross Is Made* and *Gold*. Melville's mystique of the sea, which is conceived of simultaneously as the Great Mother and as the home of predatory evil ("dat old davil sea" of *Anna Christie*) reappears again and again in O'Neill's works. The "melting pot" crew of *White Jacket*, *Redburn*, and *Moby Dick* reappears in all of O'Neill's early plays, as it does, becalmed, so to speak, in *The Iceman Cometh*. The ship as a microcosm of existence, employed so effectively in *Moby Dick*, is also inherent in all of O'Neill's early sea plays. The existential fright of cosmic loneliness that is Ishmael's in *Moby Dick* is dealt out to many of O'Neill's protagonists, as, for example, Michael Cape of *Welded:*

> *Listen! Often I wake up in the night—in a black world, alone in a hundred million years of darkness. I feel like crying out to God for mercy because life lives.*

One of the few wise men in O'Neill's plays, the Kahn of *Marco Millions*, is prone to Melvillian sentiments on the sadness, irony, and fatal ambiguity of human existence: "In order to live even wisdom must be stupid!" Or

> *My hideous suspicion is that God is only an infinite, insane energy which creates and destroys without other purpose than to pass eternity in avoiding thought. Then the stupid man becomes the Perfect Incarnation of Omnipotence and the Polos are the true children of God!*

Both writers had a strong lyric impulse without the verbal gifts of genuine implementation. And most of O'Neill's attempts at poetry, as in *The Fountain* or *Lazarus Laughed*, sound, embarrassingly, like Melville's poetic effusion in *Pierre:*

> *Mystery! Mystery!*
> *Mystery of Isabel!*
> *Mystery! Mystery!*
> *Isabel and Mystery!*
> *Mystery!*

This form of "poetry," which depends upon repetitions and exclamation points, runs throughout O'Neill's *The Fountain* and, especially, *Lazarus Laughed*.

Furthermore, practically all the generalizations that have been made about the nature of the American novel, from the critique of D. H. Lawrence to that of Richard Chase apply equally well to O'Neill: the continuous attack on commercial motivation and greed; the Manichean impulse; the tendency toward allegory and symbolism; the abstract characterization (which becomes explicit with O'Neill's use of masks); the intensity of feeling; the extremities of the experience; the intellectual energy; the tendency toward both melodrama *(Mourning Becomes Electra)* and idyl *(Ah, Wilderness!);* the radical skepticism; the lack of balance; the absence of a concrete, rich, social background; the deep contradictions, never satisfactorily resolved; the use of black and white as primary symbols (O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*); the never-ceasing concern with, and experimentation with, "art" and technique; the continuous confrontation of that abyss which always seems to be at the heart of the American cultural experience; the lack of ease or "naturalness" in the sense of, say, Tolstoy; always the enigma, the contradiction, the complexity.

At its most profound level the American novel has been marked by two characteristics: ambiguity of the document as a whole, and the

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problematical identity of some of its human constituents or characters. "What does it mean?" and "Who am I?" are the two great unanswered questions of American culture. Accordingly, every major American writer has contributed, in addition to the element of ambiguity that appears in most of their works, at least one almost totally ambiguous document: James's *The Sacred Fount* or *The Turn of the Screw;* Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun;* Melville's *The Confidence Man* or *Pierre*, subtitled "The Ambiguities"; Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger;* Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury;* and so on. Similarly, the problem of human identity runs like a skein through American culture. This problem was Mark Twain's obsessive theme and receives its fullest, most ambiguous, and darkest treatment in his *Pudd'nhead Wilson* which comes to the rather grim conclusion that the only reliable index of individuality is the tiny whorl marks at the tips of the human fingers. A correlative theme or concern is that of the interchange of energy between individuals, as one borrows the strength, and, in a sense, the *persona* of another. It is a theme common to both James's *The Sacred Fount* and Fitzgerald's *Tender Is The Night.*

O'Neill, who liked to quote Whitman's "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself," wrote his *The Turn of the Screw* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* in *The Great God Brown*, the most confused and confusing, and therefore ambiguous, of his plays. The major characters have both a mask, an exterior, and a face, an interior. Furthermore, both the mask and the face are continually in a process of change, i.e., aging and suffering. Further, it is possible for one character to assume the mask of another and thus his life, character, and destiny. But, meanwhile, his *real* face, behind the assumed mask and fate of the other, goes off in another direction. The complexities and contradictions of this interchange are practically unfathomable, as is the play which contains some of O'Neill's most powerful expressions about the "doubt of identity" that occurs so often in American literature. In the words of the play's protagonist, Dion Anthony:

Why am I afraid to dance, I who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter? Why am I afraid to live, I who love life and the beauty of flesh and the living colors of earth and sky and sea? Why am I afraid of love, I who love love? Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid? Why must I pretend to scorn in order to pity? Why must I hide myself in self-contempt in order to understand? Why must I be so ashamed of my strength, so proud of my weakness? Why must I live in a cage like a criminal, defying and hating, I who love peace and friendship? . . . Why was I born without a skin, O God, that I must wear armor in order to touch or to be touched?

But O'Neill was not only an American writer, he was also, like Whitman, a world writer. He was simultaneously the most influenceable and the least influenceable of writers. On the one hand, his intellectual debts sound like a roll-call of the culture of the European nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Wilde, Shaw, the Irish theatre, Conrad, Baudelaire, Ibsen, Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, *fin de siècle* poets, Zola, Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*, Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*, Wedekind, Yeats, Schopenhauer, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and, above all, Nietzsche and Strindberg. To which may be added, according to Doris Alexander, *Light in the Path*, a Hindu document. In this respect he was like Whitman, or like that all-seeing eye-ball which Emerson saw himself as and which Cranch pictured him as, a spacious and naked Ego that would embrace all experience, past and present, East and West, Europe and America, and fuse it to the American adventure. On the other hand, as with Whitman once more, O'Neill was the least influenceable of men, in that he was always expressing himself, and when he looked into Nietzsche or Strindberg he was, in effect, looking into a mirror. Be that as it may, he is the chief artistic vessel through which the various agonies of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe were passed on to America: for the cosmos, the death of God and a meaningless universe; for the social body, greed and injustice; for the sexes, an endless and ambiguous war; for the individual, a sense of humiliation and absurdity. All these great and distressing themes of Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Strind-

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berg and the rest are precisely the themes of O'Neill. The sacredness of the "humiliated," which certainly he must have had imprinted on his imagination by *The Idiot*, was, in truth, one of O'Neill's prime themes. In fact the humiliated constitute in his work a confraternity, and, like the Masons, they can recognize one another. As Jamie Tyrone says to Josie Hogan in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*

> *You can take the truth, Josie—from me. Because you and I belong to the same club. We can kid the world but we can't fool ourselves, like most people, no matter what we do.*

Similarly, as in Dostoevsky (and as in *The Scarlet Letter*), the great sinners instantly recognize one another. When in *The Iceman Cometh* Hickey, who has killed his wife, sees Parritt, who has betrayed his mother, he mutters: "We're members of the same lodge—in some way."

And the absurdity of it all, of human existence, provides the comic element in the last great dark plays, *The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *A Moon For the Misbegotten*, and *Hughie*, when, in the midst of some somber and dark contretemps, a wild burst of laughter breaks out. Mankind, as Nietzsche claimed, is finally best defined as the "laughing animal"—without this saving grace it all *would* be unendurable. The genuinely great thing about modern man is that he has come to see himself—faintly or greatly, as the case may be—as partly but indubitably absurd. Century after century of pompous, gesticulating, self-important heroes have finally given way to a great, wounded consciousness, an aggregate of suffering atoms, the most highly aware of whom know that membership in the "club" is the ability to perceive, accept, and laugh at the stupidity of so much of it at all. Love and laughter are our only defenses, and this is the final "message" of O'Neill, who spoke finally not for America or Europe but for us all.

JOHN HENRY RALEIGH, *a Professor of English at the University of California (Berkeley), is completing a biography of O'Neill. He recently finished a study of three American intellectuals: George Santayana, T. S. Eliot, and Edmund Wilson. Dr. Raleigh's dissertation on* Matthew Arnold in America *has been published by the University of California.*

NOTES

[1] *The chief detractors seem to have been Mary McCarthy, Eric Bentley, and the* T.L.S. *In the long run it will probably turn out to be an honor to have been attacked by these three organs of opinion. If all three dislike you, it amounts to a Medal of Honor. If you can add Bernard De Voto and Henry Seidel Canby, both in the* Saturday Review, *as O'Neill can, you may well qualify as an Unknown Soldier and have a lighted flame in perpetuity. To their credit let it be said that, among major American critics, Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling early perceived and appreciated O'Neill's power.*

[2] *The classic instance of the use of this kind of music in American literature occurs in* The Great Gatsby *when Gatsby, having lured Daisy to his mansion and not quite knowing what to do now that his dream of a life-time has been realized, orders his piano player into action, who obliges with "Ain't We Got Fun." You have to know both the words and the music of the song to realize what effect Fitzgerald was after here. The lyrics were written by Gus Kahn and Raymond B. Egan (although why it took two is a mystery), and go as follows (this is the chorus):*

Ev'ry morning, Ev'ry evening, Ain't we got fun,
Not much mon-ey, Oh! but hon-ey, Ain't we got fun
The rent's unpaid, dear,— We have-n't a car;
But an-y-way, dear,— We'll stay as we are.
E-ven if we owe the gro-cer, Don't we have fun,
Tax col-lec-tor's get-ting closer, Still we have fun.
There's noth-ing sur-er, The rich get rich and
the poor get poorer;
In the mean-time, In be-tween time, Ain't we got fun.

The relevance of those sentiments to the themes of Gatsby *should be obvious.*

The music was by Richard Whiting; in the score of the Remick Music Corp. version, "Ain't We Got Fun" is in the key of Eb. *Throughout the entire song one chord is repeated again and again, with variations, in the bass. This chord (*Eb *and* Bb*) is preceded by a grace note on A (natural). The effect then of the music is a kind of dismal "clunk," insistently repeated throughout the whole song and underlining thereby the pathos of the ostensibly "cheerful" lyrics. Whether Gatsby's piano player played it in this key and in this way, I don't know, but if he did Gatsby's pathetic plight would have been even more sadly underlined.*

[3] *A recent review of an off-Broadway production of* Desire Under the Elms *in the* New Yorker *observed, among many criticisms, "Even so, who would have thought the old script to have had so much blood in it? Or humor?"*

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Eight Modern Writers (The Oxford History of English Literature, XII). By J. I. M. Stewart. Oxford University Press. 704 pp. $11.00.

FOR A LONG TIME NOW, Mr. J. I. M. Stewart of Christ Church, Oxford, has been able to perform the brilliant feat of maintaining three distinct personalities at once. There is Professor Stewart, critic and lecturer. There is Stewart the novelist, who rewrites Henry James rather as Angela Thirkell rewrote Trollope, though with greater attention to style. And there is Michael Innes, the author of donnish detective stories, who lives embedded in Mr. Stewart's initials when he is not busy writing. But these three personalities have always been perilously near a synthesis. Michael Innes made the narrator of *There Came Both Mist and Snow* a novelist who writes in the manner of Henry James, and Stewart the Jamesian novelist brought a scholar-hero to Oxford in *The Guardians* to re-enact James's *The Aspern Papers* in plot and style. Now, in *Eight Modern Writers,* the three writing personalities have disastrously coalesced to produce a critical murder mystery which, despite a delightful plot and promising characters, does not come off.

The idea is an engaging one. Stewart-Innes sets out to tell us how eight companions – an American, three Irishmen, a Pole, two Englishmen, and an Anglo-Indian – conspire to create modern British literature. It is true that such a plot has been used before, notably by Stewart-Innes' great rival as a detective story writer, Edmund Crispin, who once wrote of a mysterious band out to rob English culture of its birthright by destroying and forging manuscripts of Chaucer, Milton, and others. But they were clumsy amateurs compared to this sinister octet, which ruthlessly turned out plays, poems, and novels until this story is swamped in a mass of irrelevant detail and meaningless anecdote, of half-hearted analysis and inaccurate dating, until – so confused and baffled are we – the conspiracy seems to have been a great illusion.

Beyond the octet there is, of course, a great array of lesser conspirators, attendants, supernumeraries, and plain incompetents, the small fry of any police operation. They are dealt with briskly and epigrammatically in the book's first nineteen pages, a rapid survey of the background and associates of the eight major criminals. The technique here is that of the police line-up. On one page, for example, Pater, James, Morris, Johnson, Dowson, Beardsley, John Davidson, Beerbohm, Kipling, Wilde, and Whistler are hustled rapidly past us, many of them never to reappear. Wells receives a page, as does Galsworthy. Gissing and Bennett share a half page between them, and these grudging summaries are partly hidden among striking but unnecessary details. Thus the eighties and nineties make up "the age of cigars and diamonds . . . of the digging out, within the

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shadow of Rheims Cathedral, of vaster and vaster caverns for the storage of millions and millions more bottles of champagne." In France, in 1904, "Proust has been translating Ruskin; presently he will enter Dr. Sollier's clinic for neurotics, but will see no reason to stop there for very long, since to a contrived seclusion of his own all society will repair should he choose to require it." The method has its drawbacks, as when the search for a phrase that will cut a figure leads Stewart-Innes to suggest that *Heartbreak House* appeared before "the German Kaiser and his war" and not after, or when the portentous phrase becomes merely silly: "when *A Passage to India* – itself a great novel – came out in 1924 it was inescapably not the same book as it would have been if there had been no 1922."

It is true that Stewart-Innes is trying here to make a point about the publication of *Ulysses* and its effect on subsequent work, but he never really makes that point. What *was* the effect of *Ulysses* on Forster's novel? "Authentic works of art bear upon one another in this way," his next sentence, is not very helpful when "this way" is never defined. And thus are we often fobbed off. We learn that Drinkwater's historical plays are "of some note" and that Granville-Barker, had he not been an incurable perfectionist, might "have taken as high a place in dramatic writing as he took in dramatic production and dramatic criticism." Here one of the basic rules of the mystery story is seriously violated. Such a story is supposed to clear up a mystery, to provide the reader with the information necessary for forming some judgment about events and their causes. But Stewart-Innes invents another unnecessary mystery, for he never really tells us what is happening, nor what his book is about. Are the social ideas of Wells and Gissing valid? Important? Relevant to the period? Interesting? Stupid? We are offered a choice, and then nudged on to the rather rootless and unrelated group of conspirators.

In the first English detective novel, *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins made use of a number of different narrators and points of view to establish his story cumulatively, and here Stewart-Innes has tried the same device and failed. The eight conspirators – their names are Hardy, James, Shaw, Conrad, Kipling, Yeats, Joyce, and Lawrence – never add up to a coherent and related plot nor to a coherent and related account. They are simply picked off one by one like the characters in Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*, though with less expertise. Nor are they convincing as characters, for they are all too inherently improbable. In a detective novel the boldness of the invented plot must be compensated for by some imaginative restraint in the creation of characters, but here there is no such restraint. The conspirators are all flat characters, almost Jonsonian "humours," so relentlessly are they left unanalyzed and presented always in the same light. We cannot believe that Yeats working in his room at Coole Park was self-consciously practicting an "aesthetic withdrawal from life" with the connivance of Lady Gregory. The real Yeats and the real Lady Gregory planned the Abbey Theatre at Coole. They made the house a literary center, and they both wrote important work there. Nor was the poet who celebrated Coole and the life he found there simply a snob. Yeats found a real value to society in the existence of the "rooted man," one whose tradition taught him who and what he was. Nor is it illuminating to ignore the argument of such a poem as "Lapis Lazuli" and then accuse the poet of frivolity for his "aesthetic adventure in Mayfair" (the first performance of *At the Hawk's Well*) three weeks before the Easter Rising. Yeats had good reasons for concentrating on poetry in the midst of war and rebellion, and they were not frivolous reasons.

One can raise similar objections to most of the other essays in the book, but one here must stand for all. In each case, Stewart-Innes seems far more interested in working up his subject's character artistically than in analyzing either the work or the man. Kipling, for example, is introduced as a kind of counterweight to Yeats, an anti-aesthete whose inconsistencies are paraded before us. After the parade we are assured that he was a "dedicated artist" and that "there was not too much hyperbole in the claim" that he had inherited "the mantle of Milton." How much is not too much of too much?

The striking phrase, the irrelevant comparison become substitutes for exploration and analysis. The reader is little helped by a reminder that *The Resurrection* is unlike *The Dynasts* because Yeats refers to orgiastic sex, but that *The Dynasts* is less lyrical, nor by a little tennis-match which Stewart-Innes conducts with himself about the relative merits of the Verloc murder in *The Secret Agent* and Tess's murder of Alec d'Urberville. Conrad can "do" his murder artistically. Hardy cannot. But *Tess* is a greater novel "simply because compassion is deeper than pity." But Conrad has "artistic resources" which are beyond Hardy. The game goes on, but there is no one to judge it.

There is one further severe criticism which must be made. The writer of detective fiction must take care to get his factual details right. The oriental knife between the baronet's shoulderblades must be from a recognizable period and culture. If an obscure poison is introduced, its properties and effects must be exactly as they are in the pharmacopoeia: prussic acid must not smell like cloves or leave the after-effects of curare. No amount of ingenuity will save the novelist who is incorrect about the details of fingerprinting, or who sets his tale in London and then misplaces a street or two. But here too Stewart-Innes has failed us. The novelist who made the solution in *The Secret Vanguard* rest on a girl's awareness that Swinburne's *A Forsaken Garden* was being slightly misquoted by a stranger on a Scottish train has here been incredibly

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careless with facts and details. Errors abound in the rather pretentious "Chronological Table" which is presumably intended as a serious part of the book. Granville-Barker's *The Marrying of Anne Leete* was first acted in 1902 (not 1901); the Maxim gun was patented and demonstrated in 1884, not "produced" in 1883; there was no "Third" Balkan War in 1913; the Turkish Republic was formally proclaimed by Kemal (no longer Pasha) in 1923, not 1922; Franklin Roosevelt did not become President of the United States until 1933; Dollfuss, not Dolfuss, was the Austrian Chancellor's name; the Stage Society was founded in 1899, not 1900. Minor points, perhaps, but a book which takes the trouble to offer such facts to its readers – among whom will doubtless be all graduate students of English literature for the next twenty-five years, or so – has the obligation to get them straight. The text is also misleading at times, as when the reader is led to believe that Shaw wrote nothing after *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* – which is misdated by a year, for good measure. The essay on Shaw ends with this play; the table adds three more, to be sure, though still with some uncertainty about dates. But there is still no indication of when Shaw's career ended. Because he willfully chose to outlive the book's chronological limits, the important *Everybody's Political What's What* (1944) and his death in 1950 must remain unrecorded. Pedantry is thus monstrously wedded to inaccuracy.

The Oxford Press' first attempt to publish a mystery novel is thus a great disappointment. These seven hundred pages constitute a kind of country-house full of suspects who are thin and unconvincing. The detective fails to understand them, and he fails to solve anything at all. Perhaps Edmund Crispin's Gervase Fen – who has assisted Stewart-Innes' Inspector Appleby in the past, and who is a Professor of English literature as well – should be called in, while the corpse is still warm.

— Robert Tracy

What I Believe. By François Mauriac. Translated and with an Introduction by Wallace Fowlie. New York: Farrar, Straus and Company. 139 pp. $3.95.

IN THIS MOVING CONFESSION and profession of faith the great French Catholic writer, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952, reviews the odyssey of his spiritual life with a clairvoyance acquired by a lifelong meticulously practised introspection. While the "Christian radicalism" of his earlier years has mellowed to some extent, Mauriac's existential realism as well as his agonizing struggle with the *mysterium iniquitatis* persist. Now 78 years of age and near the threshold of eternity, the central preoccupation of the author remains the metaphysical and theological problem of sin and salvation. With fear and trembling and even more with awe he ponders the mystery of human guilt in the face of the inscrutable omniscience of God.

Ce Que Je Crois appeared in France in 1962, and while the pages vibrate with that almost morbid soul-searching long familiar to Mauriac readers, the conclusion of this confession strikes a note of childlike simplicity and total acceptance. The main themes of Mauriac's Creed are the same we encounter in the confessional documents of his spiritual ancestors – St. Augustine, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Unamuno, and, above all, Pascal.

"This book," says Mauriac in a prefatory statement, "is not intended for scholars or philosophers or theologians. I hoped in the most simple and direct way possible to answer the question, 'Why have you remained faithful to the religion into which you were born?' " The answer to this question is – paradoxically – both difficult and easy. The reader is allowed to share in the many torturous and disquieting experiences that preceded both question and answer. He learns that in the years of adolescence Mauriac unhesitatingly examined all the objections to the Church and the Catholic faith raised by historical criticism and by Modernism but that the final choice "was determined in advance": it was "less the choice of a certain religion, of a certain Church, than the choice of *Someone* with Whom I communicated thanks to that Church and that religion." What ultimately confirmed Mauriac in his faith was the fact that, thanks to the body and the history of the Church (both more often than not presenting aspects that were, to use Nietzsche's phrase, "human, all-too-human") "a certain Word has come down to us." Actually, there are *two* such sayings which Mauriac repeatedly underscores: "Your sins are forgiven you" and "This is my body given for you."

What generated Mauriac's act of faith – notwithstanding all those aspects of creation which appeared not only bewildering but apparently unacceptable to his intelligence – was neither the beauty of Christianity (that is, the aesthetic components of Catholicism) nor the liturgy, but solely the reality of the God-Man. Consequently, "the closer I live to God . . . the less need I feel for ceremonies . . . I am neither shocked nor scandalized by the pomp of the Vatican. But neither am I dazzled or really enchanted. I am grateful to the institution for what it has saved and protected and maintained."

Mauriac does not minimize his misgivings regarding the temporal history of the Church, "its relationship with Caesar and its insertion into this world for which the Lord refused to pray," but he looks beyond this foreground view to "the soul of the Church, manifested for me no better in Saint Peter's at Rome than in the poorest village church where the small lamp burns and which I prefer. For Saint Peter's was built with money from indulgences which cost the Church half of the people who joined the Reformation. This

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was putting architecture at too high a price." And he recalls the presence among us of John XXIII and the beginning of the Ecumenical Council. Through this old man who spoke "the words of mercy which I always wanted to hear in Rome," the Holy Spirit itself addressed the world, "the spirit of love and consolation . . . He pronounces no anathema, no curse, and all nations turn toward the prow of the ancient boat, more impressed by the sight of the fisher of men than they were . . . by the explorers of the cosmos . . . Thus the sixth Pope to whom I have been obedient, the humblest of all, has scattered the cloud of distrust, the vague resentment in which I lived."

Those familiar with Mauriac's peculiar piety will not be surprised or shocked when they read: "Nothing is less natural to me than the impulse which encouraged Père Teilhard de Chardin to enlarge Christ to the dimension of the cosmos . . . I belong to another race of men. In my eyes, the deepest mystery is that of the Creator reduced to the dimensions of each creature, the least of whom is infinitely more important than the cosmos, which is blind and deaf and without conscience. I do not see what the knowledge gained by these last generations would add to what Pascal said concerning the two infinities." The *pensée* of Pascal to which Mauriac refers here, begins with the words, "All material bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its satellites are not worth the humblest human being. For man knows all that, and he knows himself. But the material bodies know nothing." But Pascal, to whom Mauriac "owes everything," who was his "master" even at the early age of sixteen, possessed an intellectual dimension which remained inaccessible to the disciple: Pascal, the scientist – the mathematician and geometrician – eludes Mauriac. We venture to say, however, that the same was not true of Teilhard de Chardin, whose mind and heart were wide and overt enough to embrace the entire Pascal – his existential as well as his scientific testimonial. With great candor Mauriac admits: "The strangest part of this story is that there is no writer about whom I am less capable of speaking than this Pascal . . . because one whole part of his genius eludes me." Why, then, did Mauriac feel so close to the spirit of Pascal? His answer to this question is quite convincing: "We knew what Christ had said to the saints, to Saint Teresa of Avila, to Saint John of the Cross; but we were not able to believe that what concerned those heroic souls could also concern us. Yet Pascal, despite his greatness, remains one of us." It was one passage in particular in Pascal's writings that struck root and lived on in "the most intimate and most secret part" of Mauriac's being: "It was to this brother that the Lord spoke the words, 'I thought of *you* in my suffering. Be consoled. You would not be looking for me if you had not already found me. For *you* I have shed a drop of blood.' " In short, Pascal owned what the disciple obtained only in his old age: "He knew he was loved, and that one drop of blood had been shed for him. He possessed certainty, peace, joy, and the triumphant happiness of grace."

The pages which precede this latter quotation illustrate Mauriac's agonizing struggle on the way to the final certitude. But, as in the case of Pascal, there remains almost to the end a Jansenistically colored distrust of the wounded human nature and also – much more strongly articulated – an almost totally negative evaluation of technical science: "I have no regard for the miracles of technology if they unfold in a materialistic prison, even if the prison has the dimension of the cosmos. I have no interest in reaching the planets if what the . . . rocket carries is this poor body destined to rot away."

In the chapter (IV) which deals with "The Demands of Purity" Mauriac remains almost obsessed with a theme which has haunted him since the days of his childhood and on which he had elaborated extensively in the essay titled *Souffrances et bonheur du chrétien* (1929); it concluded with the words of Léon Bloy, "There is only one sorrow – not to be a saint." The old Mauriac has at long last been able to rid himself of the spectres which had turned much of his youth into a nightmare: "We should not scorn the flesh. It is not the enemy I was taught to be ashamed of and to be afraid of . . . This body of ours was sanctified by the Son of Man who Himself took it on."

The life of Mauriac was a life of loneliness, of a solitude which was in part self-chosen and in part attributable to what Kierkegaard in a similar predicament referred to as his "crazy upbringing" which caused the Christian religion itself to become "a scandal" to him. "All my life," writes Mauriac, "I have felt within the visible Church a sentiment of redoubled solitude . . . I have never been truly associated with the life of a parish . . . I have been incapable of participating and have always disliked it . . . In this I am guilty, and I confess that I have been the creator of my own solitude within the Christian flock . . . The magic impassable circle which my own temperament has drawn around me . . . has condemned me to grow old and to die alone." Mauriac tells of the great loneliness which often overwhelmed him even when breaking the Living Bread with fellow-Catholics "who perform certain gestures but have no authentic religious life" and of the companionship he often felt in the presence of "true Israelites" or "holy Moslems" or "certain souls who do not belong to any definite confession but who live, as Simone Weil lived, just outside the Church." Even in the souls of "avowed militant atheists" there is frequently a great longing "for the Kingdom of God and His justice. I recognize all the signs of the love of that Christ whom they do not know."

But, alas, life's ambivalence seems to be and to remain so all-pervasive that we will have to have re-

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course again and again to that saying of Santa Teresa of Avila which Mauriac chose as epigraph for his best novel, *Le Noeud de Vipères:* "Lord, consider that we do not understand ourselves and that we do not know what we want, and that we go infinitely far astray from that which we really desire." The seasoned practical wisdom of these words reverberates in Mauriac's *Credo:* "At my age . . . we discover that we do not detest the men we think we detest and that . . . they do not detest us. We often confuse hate with exasperation."

Who, in these days of twilight in the West, are those enemies who, with Nietzsche, have proclaimed that "God is dead"? "They were once Christians and are Christians no longer. They knew Christ and refused Him . . . Whose fault is this? The truth of the matter is that Western Christianity has failed in its vocation." And since modern man "has cut off communication with God by a basic negation," the spirit of evil has been given an unparalleled chance. "Do I believe in the spirit of evil? . . . A spirit, he reigns over spirits. He is the master of illusions and dreams, in a world which has announced God's death."

Summing up the articles of his *Credo,* Mauriac, like Unamuno, invokes from the Gospel of Mark (9:23) that anguished exclamation of a father whose son was possessed by an evil spirit but who was cleansed and healed by Christ: "Lord, I believe. Come, help my unbelief!" And he adds almost serenely: "This small book has expressed nothing save this contradiction." What more can be said? "Lord, why didn't you abandon me? Yes, why didn't you? Something in me must have disarmed you" although "that doorway which the saints went through I have never even approached"; and yet "my old age is sanctified by my communion on the Living Bread . . . *What I believe?* I believe that I am loved such as I was, such as I am, such as my own heart sees me, judges me, condemns me." Truly, this is a remarkable spiritual testimonial and testament, a unique document of Christian literature.

— Kurt F. Reinhardt

Contemporary American Poetry. Selected and introduced by Donald Hall. Baltimore: Penguin Books. 201 pp. $1.25.

TWENTY-FIVE AMERICAN POETS are represented in this anthology. Surely the hall is too small for such an assemblage; the book is too short. It is impossible to squeeze all of the various facets and the many qualities of contemporary American poetry into 165 pages of actual text. Hardly any poet is adequately represented in the few pages allotted to him (six pages is the average) and those who fare best are poets who have written a few remarkable poems – Galway Kinnell, Robert Bly – rather than poets whose body of work is remarkable in its totality while less remarkable in ill-chosen snippets: Robert Lowell, James Dickey, Denise Levertov. In dealing with younger poets (the oldest here is 49, and most every one else is considerably younger), one faces a fact: most of them are still writing and have yet to produce the major work by which they will be best remembered. An instance is James Merrill whose most recent book of poems, *Water Street,* is far superior in every way to the work that represents him in the Hall anthology. Another case is the work of a superior poet whose work is not represented here at all – John Berryman. Hall dismisses Berryman in his introduction in a parenthesis while talking about Robert Lowell's *Lord Weary's Castle* as the monument to the line of tough rhetoricians beyond which it was impossible to go: "(The failure of John Berryman's *Homage to Anne Bradstreet,* as I see it, only proves my point.)" And so Berryman is dismissed as an arthritic rhetorician, as though not one of his Dream Songs ever had been printed (see RAMPARTS, May, 1963, for a representative selection). Obviously, in checking over the entries, one notices that Hall's choices have been limited pretty much to poems that had already found their way between hard covers rather than from inside that often more vital source of what is new in the "new" poetry, the magazines and quarterlies.

If so much is wrong inside this book, what is right? Its intention is right, even admirable. Donald Hall, a younger poet who has published two books of poetry, the first of which was awarded the Lamont Prize, intended this anthology to show those interested in contemporary poetry what we are writing over here. Hall is not new to the chores of anthology making. In 1957 he edited for Meridian, with Robert Pack and Louis Simpson, a collection of the work of the new poets of England and America (under 40). That anthology represented what was often described as the conservative, academic element in America. Naturally that was too pat a label, but it will suffice for now. Its publication brought about a rash of anti-anthologies; notable among these was the Evergreen anthology of contemporary poetry which represented the hip or beat *personae:* Corso, Ginsberg, Levertov, Ferlinghetti, Brother Antoninus. The situation made it appear that there were two schools (or one school, one anti-school) in American poetry, never to be joined or absorbed, let alone mutually admired. The second Meridian selection (1962) did a little to rectify this theory, although Hall was really not involved with Americans there, since he edited only the English contributions.

In this present anthology, Donald Hall has attempted to reconcile the various strands in American poetry by at least having something of the opposition represented. Corso and Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti are still missing. (Hall says that *Time* and the other publicists of the Beat Generation created them anyway when

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those poets could not really supply literary alternatives to orthodoxy in poetry.) But among the new names representing a different slant on the world are John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, James Dickey, Robert Duncan, John Logan, Denise Levertov, and Gary Snyder. Hall's effort represents a fairly successful attempt at synthesis and scope within the confines of "good taste" and what are obviously too few pages.

In his nine-page introduction, Hall manages a pellet survey of contemporary poetry, a history that inadvertently explains the poets he has included, if not the individual selections from each poet. His first few sentences and an afternote set the scene:

> *For thirty years an orthodoxy ruled American poetry. It derived from the authority of T. S. Eliot and the new critics; it exerted itself through the literary quarterlies and the universities. It asked for a poetry of symmetry, intellect, irony, and wit. The last few years have broken the control of this orthodoxy . . . We do not want merely to substitute one orthodoxy for another . . . but we want all possibilities, even contradictory ones, to exist together.*

Certainly these are useful sentiments.

The little history points out that from the mid-twenties until very recently, American poetry has functioned as a part of the English tradition. Hall indicates that the new poets admired form and attempted to write a symmetrical and intellectual poetry; Hall divides the major poets of the time (Tate, Winters, and Ransom) into those who admired the tough density of Donne, and those who preferred the wit of Marvell or the delicacy of Herrick. Immediately after World War II, two books which would represent the apex of these twin strains of density and delicacy were published and represent the true starting point for Hall's own selections. The first was Robert Lowell's *Lord Weary's Castle* and the second, "a peak of skilful elegance," Richard Wilbur's *The Beautiful Changes:* "These two poets, though they are not the oldest here, form the real beginning of post-war American poetry because they are the culmination of past poetries," comments Hall. Nothing much jarred these two currents, according to Hall, until the impact of the colloquial in American literature tickled the ears of both orthodox and less orthodox poets mainly through the influence of William Carlos Williams. The work of Denise Levertov, Robert Creeley, and Robert Duncan dramatically represents this. The stage was quiet again after that until what Hall views as a new way of looking at the world came upon the scene in the work of a poet like Robert Bly whose imagination, "is genuinely new, and so new that I lack words for it." Louis Simpson and the later poems of James Wright provide more examples of this "new way of seeing and feeling." Hall finds this phenomenon a native one.

Perhaps a brief glance at the selections from two of the twenty-five poets in this anthology, one at either end of Hall's historical yardstick, Robert Lowell and Robert Bly, will indicate something more about Hall's method and methodology.

Lowell is represented by five poems in his earlier rhetorical mode and four from what Hall calls his post-W. C. W-influenced volume, *Life Studies*. Only three of the selections are among my favorites, which is beside the point, but to the point is the fact that the selections represent Lowell inadequately and do not suggest his true range and quality. An anthology is, after all, a sampler; it should send its reader in search of more and more and more by luring him with the best. In the case of Lowell, one wonders where "Sailing Home From Rapallo" is or "Beyond the Alps," and why not "The Drunken Fisherman" or "Her Dead Brother" rather than the snip from "Between the Porch and the Altar," part III, "Katherine's Dream"? We in this country, who if we know any modern poet at all know Lowell, would prefer to see the best of him in such a representative collection. An anthology, like the front window in a store, should glitter.

It is obvious from the remarks about him in Hall's introduction that Hall is partial to Bly's work, and Bly is extremely well represented by twelve very typical and good poems. Here is part of one called "Driving toward the Lac Qui Parle River":

Nearly to Milan, suddenly a small bridge,
And water kneeling in the moonlight.
In small towns the houses are built right on the ground;
The lamplight falls on all fours in the grass.
When I reach the river, the full moon covers it;
A few people are talking low in a boat.

This seems very Chinese in tone, or like a Picasso painting in its remote connections, or on a literary level, like Gertrude Stein's bald statements about what is. In short, the sudden revelations of this kind of poetry do have ancestors, although not from an immediate past or an immediately poetic one. Is Bly new? At the beginning of something, the best of what will be is often not apparent. For the first poems in a new manner, it is often enough that they look new. I am not against Bly's poetry; I like what he does. My problem is with a method of anthology making. In Donald Hall's anthology, Robert Bly is given a better showing than is Robert Lowell and gains, therefore, an unfair advantage. In short, one can manipulate opinion and can substantiate a theory not merely by omitting this poet and including that one but also by selecting these poems as opposed to those. All the poets in Hall's collection should be there, certainly, but more fairly or more fully represented. And where are Alan Dugan and Sylvia Plath? And where is John Berryman?

The anthology is most attractively printed and bound in a coat of pleasant gaudy. There is a midget biography of each poet preceding the listing of his poems in the table of contents.

— Nancy Sullivan

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A Fine Madness. By Elliott Baker. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 319 pp. $4.95.

(Written somewhere between sleep and waking, the reviewer having read the novel in question, reflected on our world, drunk three bottles of beer, and watched several eminent authors on a panel show. The first sequence is called "Whither, Mankind?" and the players, in the order of their speaking, are:

THE HOST: *He is little and has curly hair. He is lovable and is called* LITTLE DAVID.

FIRST PANELIST: *He is little and has curly hair. He is not lovable. He sniffs airplane glue and is called* NORMAN.

SECOND PANELIST: *He wears an army jacket and a first-baseman's mitt. He drinks Sterno from a can in his shoulder-holster and is called* NELSON.

THIRD PANELIST: *A frail, intense, sparrow-looking Negro. He wears an alto saxophone and is called* JIM.

FOURTH PANELIST: *He wears a red hunting cap, backwards, and carries a suitcase from Mark Cross containing the* Complete Works of D. T. Suzuki. *He keeps his kings in the back-row and is called* J. D.*)*

LITTLE DAVID: Well! I just want to say how thrilled I am to have all you famous authors here tonight. Because I believe in discussion even though I know in some countries they don't. Norman, I think we'll begin with you because you said in the New York *Times* – and I'm going to quote you now – about this new novel by Elliott Baker, "It's an exciting novel, full of surprises, knowledge of the world, and fine proportions." Now you *said* that.

NORMAN: Yeah, I said that, but it wasn't in the New York *Times*. These newspaper guys never get anything right. What I meant was that this Baker was a real ballsy guy. I think he's got all the moves. I'd have to call him a real pricky guy. *(Sniffs airplane glue.)*

NELSON: I can't agree with Norman there. I liked some tings in dis book, but I'm not sure dis kid could go da distance. Over a whole season I mean. I admit at least he's not on da take like most a da crumbs around. Now that Joe Heller, you know, *Catch-22*, there's a real class guy. But I'd havta see dis Baker against da rest a da league. He strikes me as da kinda guy who starts lookin' back ta da bullpen about da bottom a da sixt. *(Goes to his shoulder-holster.)*

LITTLE DAVID: Jim, I know you have something to say on this subject because you're a Negro, and let me say at this time how much I admire your race and how fine a thing I think it is that a Negro – and by that I mean somebody from your racial group – could be such a great literary stylist, though I think you sometimes overstate things when you say that all Whites hate Negroes because I know our maid is one of the finest, most *lovable* people I've ever met, even though she gets too much starch in the cuffs sometimes, but I believe in discussion even though in some countries I know they don't.

JIM: All I want to say about this Baker cat is "Ellie Baby, cool, man. You're a nigger just like me." *(Flies through the room three times.)*

LITTLE DAVID: J.D.– may I call you just J.? – you have become, young man, a legend in your own lifetime for your modesty, J., and let me say again what a thrill it is for me to have all you famous authors here because I love to listen to brilliant people just talking about the things they most deeply believe in. Now I know, J., that despite your great modesty you feel very deeply about this book just like Norman and Jim did – and though Nelson didn't feel quite so deeply about it I know he believes in discussion even though in some countries they don't and I'm very anxious to hear what you have to say about Mr. Baker's book.

J.D.: Some authors when you finish their book you wanna telephone the author, like Emily Brontë, if you know what I mean. Old Heathcliff and all. But from New Hampshire they're all toll calls, for Chrissake, so you have to watch your dough and all even if your parents happen to be pretty wealthy like mine. I liked old Samson Shillitoe in this book quite a lot, if you wanna know the truth, even though he was pretty phony, but not too phony, if you know what I mean. *(He levitates.)*

(Electronic music in the background. Everybody turns into a ball-point pen, except J.D., who turns into the Complete Works of D. T. Suzuki.*)*

(The second sequence takes place in a college neither actual nor wholly ideal. The sequence is called – with the merest glance at E. M. Forster – "All Passion Spent." It involves, in the order of their speaking, an instructor named FATIGUE *and students named* CUT *and* THRUST.*)*

FATIGUE: Not having prepared last night, I shall be employing the Socratic Method today.

CUT *(aside to* THRUST*):* He's going to be droll again for Chrissake.

FATIGUE: Mr. Cut, you have read the Baker novel. What have you come to expect of novels bearing epigraphs from William Carlos Williams, as this one does?

CUT: Today it's "What I Screamed All the Way to My Lobotomy." Thirty years ago the same people would have been doing "How I Slept with Mamie in the Sewer."

FATIGUE: You will please refrain from quoting Ezra Pound.

CUT *(aside to* THRUST*):* I told you he was going to be droll.

FATIGUE: And what do you expect from novels cried up by Norman Mailer, as this one has been?

CUT: A hyper-genital hero, frequently a bullfighter. We get a variant here though, the hyper-genital poet. The source of the variant is what breeders call an outcross, probably to one of those D. H. Lawrence gamekeepers. It's the noble-savage-poet-against-the-effem-

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inate-academic-critic touch and involves, of course, what is now absolutely standard in writers of Baker's stripe, breathless references to "Dylan," never Thomas or Dylan Thomas. The sentimentality of this I find insufferable, as indeed I find most of Baker's novel. The one thing I liked in it was the copulation scene in the whirlpool bath. It is the only new thing in this line since the sleeping-bag business in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. And while I am not persuaded that the thing is physically possible, I had a momentarily pleasurable sense of enlarged horizons.

FATIGUE: Well, I find you very curt this morning, Mr. Cut, and rather too harsh perhaps. But let us hear from Thrust, who just may be our planet's last Aristotelian. Let me at this point, however, Mr. Thrust, caution you against great length in your opening and against your customary missionary activity in the close.

THRUST: On the one hand . . .

FATIGUE: A start nobly Aristotelian, but don't let me interrupt.

THRUST: On the one hand, I find Baker's novel – and it is a first novel – very promising indeed. Baker has admirable shrewdness of observation and great power on the attack. Both can be seen in his parody of the psychoanalytical books of a character who sounds like Karen Horney but is called "Alliteration" Akers:

> *He moved on to the bookshelves. Several volumes had the name Akers on their bindings* – Anxiety in the Atomic Age, New Hope for Neurotics, Fallacies of Fear – *Alliteration Akers was certainly prolific. Then* Sexual Gratification for Married Lovers *caught his eye and he glanced through the chapter headings: "How to compensate for age differences," "Preliminary play," "Frequency and timing," "Accepted occidental positions," "Reaching erotic maturity together."*

In this passage Baker performs beautifully what has always been one of the functions of the comic writer, to attack inflated nonsense and restore the tribe to its senses. The placing and the dead-pan of "Accepted occidental positions" is, to my mind, a stroke worthy of Swift. I liked too the handling of several of the minor characters, though one of the failings of this novel, incident I suppose to its being a first novel, is that there are so many characters that the reader and sometimes the author himself can't keep track of all of them. But in the scenes involving Moscowitz and Mrs. Fish and those involving the whore, Gaye, and her wooing of a C.P.A. from Jackson Heights, Baker performs notably well another of the classic labors of the comic writer, the celebration of human variety and solidarity. Nor should I omit mention of Baker's remarkable skill of plotting, particularly in the weaving together of episodes by such hoary devices as mistaken meanings and mistaken identities. In the employment of these, the classic devices of comedy, he shows wholly laudable inventiveness. Though his ending is weak, for reasons I shall be coming to in a minute, his handling of action is in general much superior to that of Joseph Heller, for example, in *Catch-22*. But now I must turn to the book's sins, and, alas, "they are as scarlet." As the title, *A Fine Madness*, suggests, the book is about sanity. Mr. Cut was describing it a moment ago as "What I Screamed All the Way to My Lobotomy," a description essentially accurate, I am afraid, though a shade flippant. Baker asks us to choose between the *sanity* represented by current psychonalytic orthodoxy and the *madness* represented by his poet-hero, Samson Shillitoe. This is the fallacy and this the sentimentality that mars the whole book. For it is clear that both are extremes and that true sanity and good sense reside in the middle ground between them.

FATIGUE: Mr. Thrust, you look on an unwell man. Not the Aristotelian mean, not this morning, I pray you, "Name it not."

THRUST: You put me, Sir, a little in the position of the Master himself, who, I'm sure you will recall, loved his teacher much but loved the truth more. Therefore, I proceed. Baker asks us to choose between "Science" and "Poetry," and of course he himself chooses "Poetry," and madness, and Samson Shillitoe. It is an obvious over-simplification and the source of all the dreary sentimentality of Baker's book, the breathless references to "Dylan" glanced at by Mr. Cut a moment ago, for example. For at exactly the point at which the book takes leave of good sense, it also takes leave of comedy and becomes bad lyric poetry. For Baker has put himself into the position of having to lyricize and celebrate madness. And his hero is more often dim-witted, crude, and unbalanced than poetic. Indeed, Baker's chosen strategy for proving that Shillitoe *is* a poet is to stress the dim-wittedness, crudity, and imbalance in the apparent belief that these qualities *make* the poet. One further consideration, and then I will conclude. This is a first novel, its author's first published writing as a matter of fact, though the references on the dust jacket to his service in World War II suggest that he must be in his forties. I must therefore find against him, for I cannot imagine that a comic writer of any real importance could believe much after twenty-five the things that Baker believes. Nor do I know of any precedents for it. But the book is strongly plotted and has some wildly funny things in it. So I think I will hedge a little here and end as Max Beerbohm once did, who, at the end of an essay where he had argued strongly for his own views, wrote "On the other hand . . ."

FATIGUE: A most un-Aristotelian close, Mr. Thrust. I congratulate you.

(They file out singing "Gaudeamus Igitur." At the door everybody turns into a bound volume of Notes and Queries.*)*

— Warren Coffey

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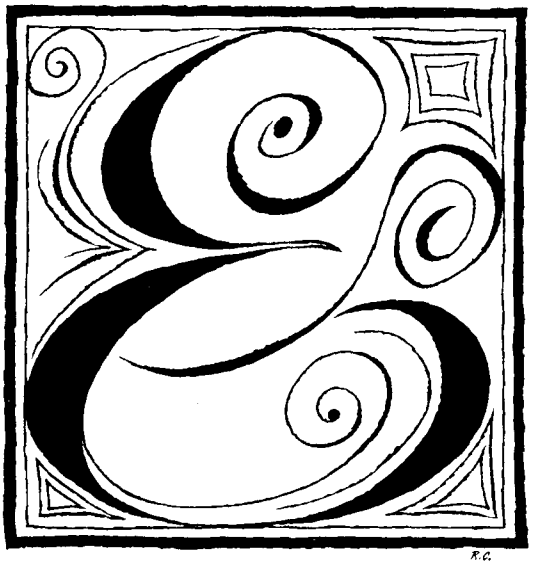

Loaves and Fishes. By Dorothy Day. New York: Harper and Row. 215 pp. $4.95.

A spirited informal chronicle of upwards of thirty years of the Catholic Worker Movement and a round, brave *apologia.* Quartered well outside Eden in some of the nation's most chronic and bitter slums, Miss Day and her co-workers have had to stroke the tiger squalor every day. They have therefore been little disposed to romanticize poverty as is sometimes done from expensive pulpits or by those who live with advanced social ideas and a Golden Retriever in Scarsdale. The Catholic Worker people have sometimes had – and Miss Day herself is the most notable example – the ability to accept poverty, and by accepting it, to make it holy and to make it sing. The tone of this volume is occasionally elegiac, as when Miss Day remembers Peter Maurin and other co-workers of the old time, now dead, or when she glances at old or continuing wars with authorities civil and ecclesiastic. But it is a stronger tone that dominates the book, one that has something in it of the fine and earned serenity of Milton's last view of human suffering: "Nothing is here for tears . . . nothing but well and fair."

The Hack. By Wilfrid Sheed. Macmillan: New York. 237 pp. $4.95.

A novel about Bert Flax who writes hack inspirational stuff for Catholic magazines and addresses Holy Name Societies on the Red Menace. The type is real enough and Sheed knows his terrain. But the novel doesn't develop any sustained pace or power until the finely managed scenes at the end where Flax, unable to produce his annual Christmas poem, has a fairly spectacular breakdown. The book has some wryly observed characters, Flax's anti-Catholic mother-in-law, for example, or Fr. Chubb, the editor of *The Passenger,* which publishes Flax's kind of writing and is a kind of market outlet for the Catholic edification industry. Although Sheed does not appear to have a talent robust enough for comedy, there are fine flashes of satire in his book, signs that he might someday move out of the lightweight class. Ironically, Sheed's writing suffers from the precise failing that he exposes in Bert Flax: the determination to be, at all costs, edifying and "nice." Satire should be made of sterner stuff.

A Singular Man. By J. P. Donleavy. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 402 pp. $6.00.

In his first novel, *The Ginger Man* in 1955, J. P. Donleavy came forward as the Roaring Boy O, a kind of stenographer's Brendan Behan. It is a role dear to the maudlin hearts of Irish-American writers of Donleavy's rank, and he was not unamusing in it. There was a lot of swagger in the book and a lot of Hibernian roaring in taverns, which did not entirely conceal the fact that basically Donleavy was soft as a City Judge. Donleavy, nothing if not a quick study, has now been reading Samuel Beckett and in *A Singular Man* has tried to go cosmic and write of human isolation. For one who has professed to be such a free spirit and such a free-wheeling and original rogue altogether, Donleavy has written a deplorably *literary* novel, one that borrows from practically everybody in sight, from Beckett to Truman Capote. Worse though, Donleavy's softness and self-indulgence are painfully evident when he concludes from the failure of his hero's adolescent dream of love that love has gone out of the world, alas and wailaway. And worst of all, the Donleavy prose has sentences like this one: "On the corner lolly pop traffic lights tasted all day from red to green with lemon in between."

REVIEWERS

WARREN COFFEY, *Review Editor of Ramparts, teaches at the University of San Francisco.*

KURT F. REINHARDT *teaches at Stanford.*

NANCY SULLIVAN *teaches at Rhode Island College.*

ROBERT TRACY *teaches at the University of California (Berkeley).*

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